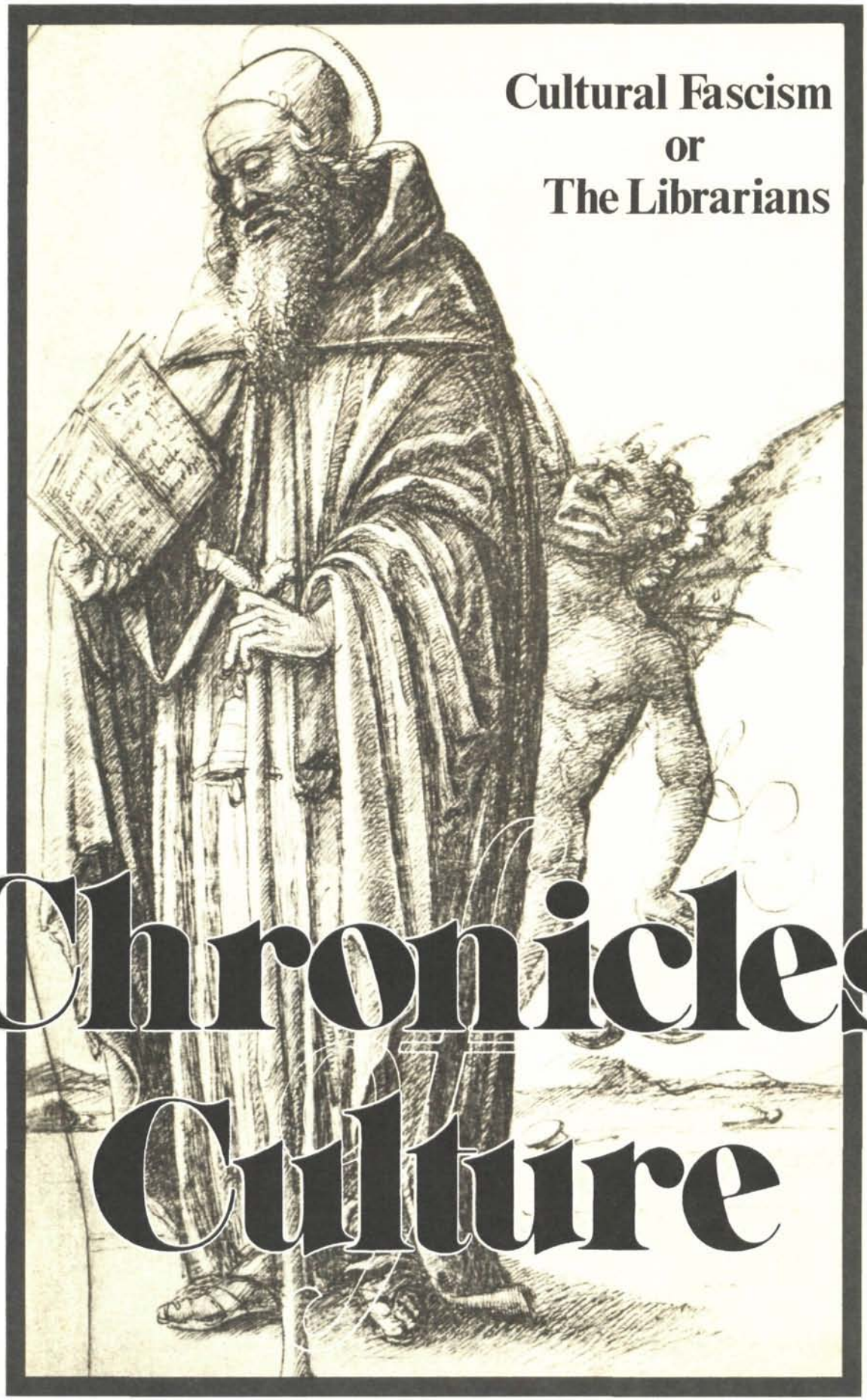

Cultural Fascism or The Librarians

Chronicles of Culture

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Cultural Fascism or The Librarians

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Editor's Comment

> It is in everyone's interest for libraries to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are extreme, distasteful . . .
>
> —Kathy Russell*

What do librarians have in common with fascism? Aren't the words jarringly at odds with each other? Unless we make it clear that they are opposites in our perception—as a matter of fact, librarians are the victims of fascism—their mere juxtaposition becomes unfair, suspicious, quite reprehensible. After all, fascism comes from that corner of our consciousness and our vocabulary where we store the most adverse connotations. And librarians? Aren't they those wonderful, always-smiling, hard-working, mild-mannered people who exert themselves to bring us pleasures of the soul, cerebral improvement, enlightenment of mind and heart? Aren't they in the forefront of the effort to make the society, ourselves, the entire world better?

Yes, they are, or at least their social image is formed according to that reasoning and has been consistently projected as such for the last couple of centuries of Western civilization. Lately, however, we may have difficulty when assuming that all librarians are the proponents, defenders and stalwarts of not only gentle and courteous reasonableness but the very notion of freedom as it has been conceived and cultivated in America. A number of them, nowadays, seems to have fallen prey to some forces of ideological irrationality, and we begin to wonder whether they are on our side—the side of the citizenry—at all. Indications abound (for instance, the current insistence of many librarians that *Show Me,* a child-pornography photo album, is a suitable, even necessary item to offer to their patrons) that they have opted for an avid doctrinairism and intend to champion some specious shibboleths whose emptiness offers nothing for the people's good—there is only room for the hollow ring of self-righteous orthodoxy. And this is where fascism comes in—every totalitarianism begins with transmuting feelings of abuse into an attitude which proclaims to the world: Because I am questioned, scrutinized, objected to, that means I'm victimized by some sinister and unnamed forces, and therefore I'm better than my opponents. I'm right, just, noble, pure and entitled to do whatever *I* alone consider proper and moral. In a word: *They,* those who oppose me, are a priori bad and I am a priori good. Therefore, I may exert as much power as suits me and my self-proclaimed values—which in itself is justification to do to my censurers whatever I consider right and to suppress by any means their evil machinations.

We are afraid that this rationale has recently invaded the psyches of many American librarians. What many of them voice in the media as their postulate is nothing short of what we would not hesitate to call cultural fascism. The war has started. The point of contention: What should be channeled through the public and school libraries into the minds and sensitivities of the reading public, which includes multitudes of juveniles? In general, librarians assume the position that they, and *only* they, should decide that. Any proposition or attempt to share this prerogative, or even to discuss it, is branded with the frightful, paralyzing word *censorship.* Yet, the citizenry, who fund public libraries with their tax money, respond that the issue is not that simple and that other concerned parties, like the parents, for example, or teachers, or social activists of *all* persuasions, or the clergy of *all* denominations (that is people who, for millennia, have been involved with the shaping of characters through reading) also deserve to have a say. Nonsense, claim the librarians, or at least that portion of them which subscribes to the rigid liberal orthodoxy: *everything* should be made available to everybody, for no one forces anyone to read—choosing a book is sacrosanct and any interference with this principle and formula spells oppression, repression, reaction and slavery of mind—that is, censorship. However, as the librarians of the liberal faith are in the majority and hold sway over libraries all around the country, the net result of their hegemony is quite different from their sanctimoniously preached laissez-faireism: children in Long Island public libraries are unconditionally free to drink at the font of what many people would see as vicious pornographic wisdom, but *Mary Poppins* has been evicted from some libraries in California as irrelevant to the proper vision of childhood. What this means is that there are forces, like unsavory fashions, which are more effective than any open directive in compelling people to read—so the so-called "free" choice is very much a manipulated occurrence.

The local press plays a major role in the confrontation between librarians and citizens. The provincial press is replete with punk liberals who practice a sort of punk-yellow-liberal journalism, and who, with punk-liberal self-righteousness, have quickly caught the enthusiasm for brandishing "book-burner" slogans and banners. No moral sensibilities, subtleties or emotional shadings of this issue for punk liberals: the First Amendment rolls out of their typewriters as some sort of football with which they can score some raucously greeted touchdown. These journalists are the First Amendment's sports fans and pompon girls. Those who point out the Amendment's sociomoral ambivalences are just a "gang of moralists" in eyes dimmed by mindless, cheering fury. Of course *Time* magazine, that infallible stockpile of well-preserved, all-occasion hypocrisies, can afford a more middlebrow approach to the problem: it recently published

*Quoted in an article by Nat Hentoff in *Village Voice,* February 11-17, 1981.

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an essay, "The Growing Battle of the Books," based on vintage *Time-Life* selections of half-evidence, demi-truths and discount-priced reasoning. According to *Time's* author, a new populist mood in America is partial to a kind of censorship that keeps "troubling ideas out of . . . books and minds," and is hostile to "open traffic in ideas that not only nourishes a free society but defines its essence." This, of course, in the oldest tradition of liberal sanctimoniousness, is a ruthless, sneaky attempt to misrepresent the issue.

In point of fact, the present contention between concerned citizenry and librarians has nothing to do with the censorship of books, printed matter or publications—and even less with ideas. Censorship is a prohibition against printing or publishing. Nobody in America is prevented from publishing anything. No one is barred from entering a book shop and buying anything he wants—from *Ulysses* to *Hustler.* But a *public*-school library is funded by *public* money provided largely by parents who want to shield their children from the availability and accessibility of reading material judged by the parents to be inappropriate. To deny parents this right has nothing to do with freedom, democracy or "book-burning"; what it does involve is a liberal despotism that can be termed cultural fascism. The individual, parental, evaluation of what is, or is not, permissible is as much a democratic prerogative as the free circulation of ideas. In a recent piece, this same *Time* magazine asserted that the catastrophic proliferation of violence *is* strictly connected to the cultural distribution of specific sociomoral attitudes via entertainment, reading matter, television, movies, etc. Why *Time* does not see any relation between the unlimited access to pornography—even in its more refined form—and the social plague of teen-age pregnancies (one of the most ominous diseases of our age, one which annihilates the very process of human maturation and transforms the society into a freak show, not only in its normative sense but also in its psychosomatic capability of dealing with the rudiments of life) is a mystery.

We mourn the passing of Mrs. Maxine Steinman-Mayewski, *Chronicles of Culture's* contributor and our friend. She was a writer, editor and book reviewer. Her talents helped Radio Free Europe in the initial phase of its existence. Above all, she was a warm, wise and helpful human being who will be remembered.

The sociomoral permissiveness which the cultural fascists try to impose on all of us offers only the dissolution of standards, whose result is usually an accumulation of broken lives, a mass of retarded children, human unhappiness in a social dimension whose sociomoral consequences are unpredictable, but certainly quite pessimistic.

As we have often repeated, liberalism and the Liberal Culture are *not* the same: for over 50 years we have watched as proponents of a hitherto-respectable ideology began to spew out noxious vapors which pollute our atmosphere far more than any chemical agent ever could. The corrupted ideology has generated a climate in which cultural fascism thrives, in which a contemptuous disregard for the majority's cultural demands has become the supreme will of the minority. To deny a majority the right to lynch is proper in a democracy, but to deny it the actualization of its preferences of ethics, custom and convention turns democracy into a caricature—and that is exactly what the fascist librarians and their liberal instigators have done by their manipulation of the First Amendment. It is now obvious that the cultural fascists' postulate is an unrestricted-by-any-law blessing to ram *their* nonnegotiable values down the throats of people who desperately wish to live by other values. If this is a continuation of the idea of the social contract, then the very words "social contract" and "despotism" no longer mean anything. Turning the First Amendment into a tumor that is eating away at the American constitutionality seems to us a rather perverted manifestation; it was that kind of absolutism that the founding fathers fought against.

What makes people so bitterly antiliberal in today's America is the liberals' claim to possess the sole franchise on indignation. They and *only* they may righteously protest the "encroachment of rights," or cry "bigotry!" or "censorship!" whenever *their* ideas are spurned. They have pre-empted all possible privileges relating to any decision conditioned by one's own reason and conscience because, according to them, liberals have a monopoly on reason and conscience. Everybody else's feelings, sensibilities, beliefs matter little, or nothing, if they happen to conflict with liberal feelings and beliefs. Thus, a proposition for a rational discourse on pornography's effect on human adolescence is an unthinkable rape of the human mind, of social freedom in the liberal dialectic. But freedom is meaningless when it serves to dissolve a civilization which was based on natural rights and laws. What follows is the frantic defense of the freedom to turn ourselves into sociocultural vegetables, to transmute our existential dimension into behavioral mush. Those librarians who furiously battle any normative argument loom, in our view, as the paladins of cultural fascism.

—Leopold Tyrmand

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Innate Depravity & the Nature of Man

James R. Mellow: *Nathaniel Hawthorne in His Times;* Houghton Mifflin Co.; Boston.

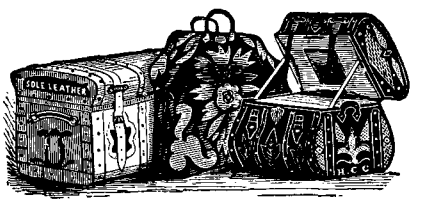
by Stephen L. Tanner

While I was reading a historical marker near Harvard University recently, a young man in the uniform of youth cult—that is, in calculated dishabille and displaying a conspicuous lack of personal hygiene—stepped to the marker and, seemingly oblivious of the crowd of pedestrians about us, urinated against it. I had just come from the Longfellow House, stopping to browse at the bookstores and magazine stands near Harvard Station. After reading James R. Mellow's excellent portrait of Hawthorne and his times, I cannot help but wonder how Hawthorne would react to an excursion similar to mine. I suspect he would consider himself to be in a country more foreign to him than any he visited in Europe.

While it is idle to speculate on how Hawthorne would respond to the dress, behavior and printed matter presently encountered near Harvard Square, it is not idle to reflect upon how our culture responds to him. To do so may help us better to understand ourselves and our literary values.

Hawthorne's place among the great American authors is secure. But there is something a little puzzling about this in light of the fact that he was essentially a Puritan and today's liberal culture is self-consciously anti-Puritan. Randall Stewart refers to him as "perhaps the Puritan of Puritans among the great American writers." He was not Puritan in Mencken's flippant sense of being haunted by the fear "that someone, somewhere may be happy." That definition merely trivializes a serious matter. And he was not a Puritan in the sense of adhering to Puritan dogma. He often criticized that dogma, and he clearly came down hard on the bigotry, intolerance and cruelty of the old Puritans. Nevertheless, his stories had a way of taking the Puritan side. As Mark Van Doren pointed out, "Hawthorne did not need to believe in Puritanism in order to write a great novel about it. He had to understand it, which for a man of his time was harder." (And it is perhaps even harder for a man of our time.) When Hawthorne criticized the Puritans, he did so within their own frame of reference, for their spiritual pride and lack of charity, which prevented them from achieving the very goals to which they aspired. He did not ignore them as his transcendentalist friends did, nor did he dismiss their problems as unreal.

Hawthorne's Puritanism manifests itself in a vein of asceticism, of restraint, of discipline. An assumption of human imperfection is evident, along with the recognition of the long discipline required for human improvement. Melville, in speaking of "the power of blackness" he perceived in Hawthorne's fiction, says it derives its force from some appeal to the Calvinistic sense of innate depravity, "from whose visitation, in some shape or other, no deeply thinking mind is always and wholly free." But when Hawthorne seems closest to Puritanism, he is also closest to classic Christianity, to the fundamental view of man's relation to God expressed by Christian writers from St. Paul to Paul Tillich. Hyatt H. Waggoner's assessment is correct: "Hawthorne's sensibility was primarily religious, and his instinct was for the central catholic tradition of Christian humanism."



An irony that emerges in sorting out what constitutes Puritanism is that frequently its avowed enemies clearly bear the stamp of its most negative aspects: intolerance, self-righteousness and lack of a sense of humor. The old Puritan Fathers would be hard pressed to outdo the humorless adherence to dogma and intolerant rigidity of some of our anti-Puritan reformers. And as Edmund Fuller once demonstrated in an essay titled "The Revival of Total Depravity," the difference between the naturalistic view of man in some contemporary writers and the extreme Calvinistic view is more apparent than real.

I like to think that most readers of Hawthorne are engaged by the quality of his moral imagination and see his work as a significant criticism of life. But there are other ways to read and praise Hawthorne, and we must be aware of them in order to understand why he is respected by members of the liberal culture who have little taste for his Puritanism.

One way to approach it is to focus upon the aesthetic aspects of his fiction. Hawthorne was a careful artist and used a great deal of functional imagery and symbolism. Modern criticism, so much attuned to image, symbol and allegory, has found his method particularly congenial. Textbooks introducing fiction inevitably include Hawthorne stories because they obviously and consistently use the patterns formalistic criticism looks for. The remarkable accumulation of Hawthorne criticism since the 1940's is a lasting achievement of the New Critical period in literary study. Unfortunately, the quantity of sophisticated multiple interpretations is so large that it intimidates the reader or exhausts him to the point that he has no energy left to form his own personal response. Moreover, much of this criticism loses

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itself in the pursuit of image patterns, considering the detection of such patterns as an end in itself rather than as a means Hawthorne used to explore the problem of moral growth.

Mellow often highlights biographical information that is closely connected with the novels and stories. Such information could serve as a salutary remedy for overly ingenious formalistic interpretation. We must never discount the resourcefulness and possibilities of the creative imagination, but it is good for us to know that something is in the story primarily because it was in the author's experience. This may temper the interpretive use we make of it.

A second approach to Hawthorne that allows for enjoyment and appreciation without requiring an understanding of or sympathy for his Puritanism is to focus on the element of romance. He made a distinction between the novel and the romance, preferring the latter because it permitted him a latitude he desired in treating human experience. This is where the characteristic of the weird enters—mystery, fantasy, abnormal psychology, hints of the supernatural and occult. The taste for such things is perennial, and, judging by the current vogue of fantasy, horror stories and science fiction, is presently at a high point.

But this approach is also incomplete, because it fails to recognize that the elements of romance are only instrumental. As Hawthorne explains in the preface to *The House of the Seven Gables,* he makes use of romance to treat more profoundly "the truth of the human heart." And he had some penetrating and important things to say about the human heart. Many of them have to do with the question of reform.

Hawthorne's attitude toward reform is hardly one to appeal to the modern liberal. His age was one of numerous reform movements: agitation for peace, temperance, women's rights, prison and asylum reform, the abolition of capital punishment, the abolition of slavery and the equalization of wealth. Contrary to the common misconception that he was a recluse detached from the affairs of the real world, Hawthorne was in fact an alert citizen with wide interests. Mellow's biography makes this clear. He was informed concerning reform movements, and he was skeptical of them. Part of his skepticism derived from firsthand observation of reformers among his neighbors, his in-laws and at Brook Farm.

He seemed to share Thoreau's opinion that doing-good "is one of the professions which are full." Thoreau also noted that "There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root. . . ." Hawthorne, as Arlin Turner suggests, "seems to have thought and to have said indirectly, that while the reformers were busy with the surface manifestations, he was probing, in his works, at the source of all crime and wrong and suffering." He believed regeneration must come from within—an affair of the heart, the religious affections, not merely the intellect. In "Earth's Holocaust" after reformers have tossed into the conflagration all things that promote misery and injustice, a "dark visaged stranger, with a portentous grin," reminds them that the human heart remains. "And unless they hit upon some method of purifying that foul cavern, forth from it will reissue all the shapes of wrong and misery—the same old shapes or worse ones —which they have taken such a vast deal of trouble to consume to ashes." Hawthorne would be appalled by our century's political illusion that all problems are capable of a political solution. For him, legislative fiat is insufficient where the nature of man is intricately concerned.

Hawthorne set himself against the reform impulse of his age not because its utopian aims were undesirable, but because (as he said of John Brown) it "preposterously miscalculated the possibilities." Moreover, the reform impulse was often idealism in the abstract. "In the grand scheme of reform," he observed, "the objects of charity were of less concern than the charity itself." Idealism in the abstract is mistaken idealism that can damage human ties and tear the social fabric. On the whole, he once remarked, the conservatives "are the best worth knowing. The others, with all their zeal for novelty, do not seem to originate anything; and one feels, as it were, a little disgusted to find them setting forth their poor little views of progress, especially if one happens to have been a Brook Farmer." It was impossible for a man like Hawthorne to be an enthusiastic partisan. The tenor of his mind and his capacity for imagination put him altogether out of harmony with the passion of the hour. As one of his contemporaries whom Mellow quotes puts it, "His keen intellect served to show him the weaknesses and vanities and vulgarities of the whole class of reformers."

One of the characteristics that distinguished Hawthorne from his reformer friends was what his son Julian called his "unfailing humor." It was a humor originating in skepticism, an ironic, often whimsical view quick to recognize incongruities. It often took the form of self-effacing comments on his own writing and behavior, of which Mellow has provided a generous number of examples. A man like Hawthorne, who did not take himself too seriously, was an unlikely candidate for the fervid reforming postures expected by his liberal friends and in-laws.

A third approach that allows one to acknowledge Hawthorne's significance without confronting his Puritanism and conservatism is to read one's own modern views into his works. Like all great literature, his work is complex and richly suggestive, and consequently pliable to adaptation to one's own predispositions. For example, in doing some homework for his review of Mellow's book for *Newsweek,* Walter Clemons's mind was "set on fire" by the story "Wakefield." In talking about it, he uses terms like "existential abyss,"

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"apocalypse" and "postrealist economy." What touched him off, I suppose, was Hawthorne's phrase "Outcase of the Universe." This immediately set contemporary existentialist chords vibrating. But what a limited response to an author who devoted a career to exploring the large issues of good and evil.

Alfred Kazin's review for the *New York Times Book Review* provides another example. Kazin praises Hawthorne for having "a *literary* imagination delicately sure, subtle, unexpected" (emphasis added). He has no praise for his *moral* imagination; in fact, he asserts unfairly that "Hawthorne alone of the classic American writers in Concord was indifferent to the horrors of slavery."

According to Kazin, "What is special in his thought is the belief that though no moral order may really exist, responsibility for order has fallen on the sinner himself. So his relation to the moral order in modern, faithless times is problematical, endlessly difficult. It is his own darkness of suffering and preoccupation that he must live with. There is nothing to guide us but 'soul'—a word central in Hawthorne, but a word standing alone, as every Hawthorne character does." This is a modern view being imposed upon Hawthorne, and it is a distortion. Hawthorne never doubted a moral order to which the individual is responsible. His characters feel guilt not on their own account but because they have broken God's laws; and they see themselves and their relations with people and institutions about them in the light of that assumption. Kazin is correct in noting the solitude (the vogue word would be "alienation") in Hawthorne's fiction, but he is mistaken in attributing it to a lack of moral orientation in the world. The truth is quite the contrary. The characters are alone when they separate themselves from the moral order and from what Hawthorne refers to in "Ethan Brand" as "the magnetic chain of humanity," which derives its cohesive force from a God-centered moral order.

Approaches that fail to recognize the centrality of Hawthorne's persistent conservative moral slant are purblind. Hawthorne, as Arlin Turner has pointed out, "was never reluctant to say that he had a moral question under consideration or to state baldly the conclusion he had reached—or to define the possibilities if he chose to leave the answer ambiguous." The suggestions for stories that he jotted down for himself were moral in their initial form, and unless they lent themselves to some moral application, were likely to remain unused. His fiction reflects his personal values, which his daughter Rose characterized in this way: "He hated failure, dependence, and disorder, broken rules and weariness of discipline, as he hated cowardice." He sided with the orthodox, traditional Christian view of man and the world. His stories treat man's struggle for redemption and dramatize the necessary role of suffering and discipline in the purification of self. He does not apotheosize the self but warns against its perversions, obsessions, and insidious deceptions.

There may be hope in the fact that he is still considered great, even though liberal critics may mistake the nature of that greatness. The hope would arise if the public retains its respect for his works in spite of much morally myopic literary criticism rather than because of it. □

The Juicy Fullness of Being

E. L. Doctorow: *Loon Lake;* Random House; New York.

by Joshua Gilder

As *Loon Lake* opens, Joe Korzeniowski, lower-class immigrant's son, carnival roustabout and all-round tough guy, reflects on his childhood in Paterson, New Jersey: "They [his parents] were hateful presences to me . . . it was my life they resented, the juicy fullness of being they couldn't abide . . . They were all dried up. They were slightly smoking sticks. They were crumbling into ash. What, after all, was the tragedy in their lives implicit in the profoundly reproachful looks they sent my way?"

Does this seem improbable language for Joe of Paterson? For the unsqueamish reader, however, enlightenment follows 258 pages later—on the very last page, to be exact. There he will discover—and I'm about to give away the punch line to this joke of a book, so close your eyes if you don't want to know—Korzeniowski becomes Bennet and is appointed deputy assistant director of the Central Intelligence Agency. So maybe what we have here are his memoirs after a lifetime of bureaucratic service; no doubt Doctorow is pointing out the baleful effects of covert activities on prose style.

Even so, this "juicy fullness of being" is a bit hard to swallow. Now, Doctorow has been universally proclaimed a great stylist, a literary innovator, so no doubt we're supposed to take his juicy fullness seriously, but it seems to me there is only one type from whose mouth or pen such an unfortunate image could issue naturally and in character: a college professor of creative writing whose mind has been turned to mush teaching too many sincere undergraduates; specifically, Doctorow.

Such lapses in taste are far from rare. It's hard to know to what purpose the author fills whole pages of text with the most egregious poetry, the blankest of blank verse, or why he inflicts on his reader such unimaginative, moronic word play as the following:

Come with me

Mr. Gilder is an associate editor of Saturday Review.

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Compute with me
Computerized she prints out me

Commingling with me she becomes me
Coming she is coming is she
Coming she is a comrade of mine
Comrades come all over comrades
Communists come upon communists
Hi. Hi.

We are here to complete our fusion
We are here to create confusion
Do you confuse coming with confession?
Do you fuel for nuclear compression?
I'm for funicular ascension.

Either this is failed satire (but who is he satirizing, himself? Bad poetry? His own disjointedness?) or Doctorow simply doesn't realize how truly awful this is. After all, he got away with *Ragtime*. If everybody tells him that's great literature, how is he to know any different?

Evidently Doctorow still has a thing about computers. Biographical passages begin "Data linkage" or "Computer data," a hackneyed device more appropriate to the "Twilight Zone" (and Rod Serling does it better), very much a dated peeve, vintage 50's or early 60's. There's a curious feeling when reading *Loon Lake* that one is wending one's way through a junk store of clichés—clichés of all shapes and sizes, stylistic, literary, political. Doctorow often writes with little punctuation, with a flow of words more facile than felicitous that mirrors neither thought nor spoken language, but that appears to be striving toward the poetic, a sort of "E. L. Doctorow, meet E. E. Cummings." If he stuck to it consistently, this artificial language might justify itself to some degree simply as hiw own quirky affectation. The amusing thing is that Doctorow fairly quickly gives up the enterprise, slipping back into traditional punctuation, either for its greater clarity, or because he didn't feel it worth the effort. (In this, of course, he would have been right.) From then on he takes up the cause of experimentalism only sporadically, usually as he begins a new chapter, and the attempt is generally short-lived.

In this passage, street-wise Joe is caught breaking into the church's poor box: ". . . the fat priest in his skirts grabbing my neck with a hand like pincers . . . I twist turn kick the Father has balls they don't cut off their own balls they don't go that far the son of a bitch —spungo! I aim truly and he's no priest going down now with eyes about to pop out of his head, red apoplectic face I know the feeling Father but you're no father of mine." Heard it before? Fat priest in skirts, and "you're no father of mine"? Later on Joe bums his way to Loon Lake, the Adirondack retreat of robber-baron industrialist F. W. Bennet, and there vagrant and tycoon have a conversation:

> 'I'll tell you,' Bennet said. 'I always respect a man's decision. Never try to argue him out of it. You're not staying here and you're not going home.
>
> That leaves you back on the road, doesn't it? Back on the Bum. Well I say why not, if that's what you want. But be sure you can handle it. Just be sure you've got the guts.'

Suddenly the fog lifted from *Loon Lake* and I realized that despite all appearances I wasn't sitting at home reading a novel—I was at the movies.

This is a film script, embroidered and prettied up with all sorts of stylistic doodads to give it some class, some intellectual cachet in Hollywood. Hell, if it fools the New York literary types, it's a cinch to go over with the cocaine crowd. To them this is the forefront of the literary vanguard. They must feel awfully gratified to be able to understand it. It's right up their alley: the hard-boiled industrialist (played by John Huston) and his aviatrix wife lost over the sea (Amelia Earhart was, for some inexplicable reason, enjoying a big vogue as a feminist pop heroine at the time Doctorow was writing this). She is described as an ultra-WASP, asexual, thin and taut with tiny breasts; a Katherine Hepburn type, or, being more up-to-date, Jane Fonda.

At one point two lovers are separated by an earthquake: "The streets were cracking open. I ran back, the city was falling down everywhere, I climbed over the rubble, I saw her coming after me with arms raised, the cobblestones heaved, the street broke open, it filled with water, I reached her and grabbed her hand just as the earth sank away and she fell in, she fell from my hands and where the earth had been there was a steaming lake." Can't you just visualize it? And with Dolby sound!

All the refuse of popular culture lies scattered about these pages; terrible jokes about cloning (popular with the "Saturday Night Live" contingent), the poet who takes instruction in a Zen monastery with the appropriately eccentric master (so we're taken through all the tired steps of that old story. Does Doctorow think we haven't heard it all told, and better, before? Does he think he's added anything new? But this is the movies, remember, where one doesn't expect anything original, just the same scenes reshuffled and put in a new package), and the gang rape of the fat lady at a traveling carny. This last is significant not only for its quality of unpleasant déjà vu; it is perfectly representative of a faddish element in con-

"... a most scintillating, moving experience."
—*Chicago Sun-Times*

"The most nourishing, haunting American novel . . ."
—*Quest '80*

". . . a fascinating, tantalizing novel . . ."
—*New York Times*

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temporary literature that populates its fictional world with freaks and grotesques and their nonhero victimizers.

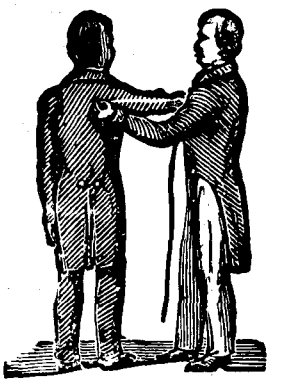
The fat lady dies from the violation, the carny owner's wife and Joe run off with the proceeds collected at the event, Joe decides the wife is fat and ugly too, sexually brutalizes her (but the old bag loves it), abandons her, then takes the money and scatters it to the winds. One might object that such winsome philanthropy is not in Joe's character, but at this point in the proceedings who can think of such trifles? Literature such as this, so awash in moral anomie, is not in itself remarkable—it's quite common these days. Truly amazing is the author's apparent belief that he has redeemed himself (or Joe) with this flimsy final gesture, that he has made some sort of *statement.*

And here comes another of Doctorow's statements (it's hard to determine from the format whether this is meant as poetry or as a computer print-out):

> Generally speaking a view of the available economic systems that have been tested historically must acknowledge the immense power of capitalism to generate living standards food housing education the amenities to a degree unprecedented in human civilization. The benefits of such a system while occasionally random and unpredictable with periods of undeniable stress and misery depression starvation and degradation are inevitably distributed to a greater and greater percentage of the population. The periods of economic stability also ensure a greater degree of popular political freedom and among the industrial Western democracies today despite occasional suppression of free speech quashing of dissent corruption of public officials and despite the tendency of legislation to serve the interests of the ruling business oligarchy the poisoning of the air water the chemical adulteration of food the obscene development of hideous weaponry the increased costs of simple survival the waste of human resources the ruin of cities the servitude of backward foreign populations the standards of life under capitalism by any criterion are far greater than under state socialism in whatever forms it is found British Swedish Cuban Soviet or Chinese. Thus the good that fierce advocacy of personal wealth accomplishes in the historical run of things outweighs the bad. And while we may not admire always the personal motives of our business leaders we can appreciate the inevitable percolation of the good life as it comes down through our native American soil.

Is this an acceptance, albeit a grudging one, of capitalism? Could it be the large monies flooding in from *Ragtime's* paperback and movie sales that have brought about this revolution in the author's consciousness? Personally, I suspect he's just covering his tracks. Liberal socialism has been, even for the most obtuse, largely discredited, and if there is anything Doctorow has, it's a nose for changing fads in thought.

But of course nothing could be more repugnant to his effete, imitative aesthetics (if one can call it aesthetics) than the energetic, creative forces of capitalism. In every sentence Doctorow evinces a tired, uncreative mind, fearful of anything new, one that can only regurgitate in slightly digested form the common run of ideas. Whatever his obfuscations, there's no denying that Doctorow is basically a wholehearted devotee of the anti-



democratic left. Just as *Ragtime*, beneath its quaint exterior, was propaganda for political terrorism—all the more cowardly for being displaced a hundred years in history. If that's his position, despicable though it is, it would have been at least more honest to come out in favor of machine-gunning tourists in the Tel Aviv airport. In this context, *Loon Lake* takes on a decidedly ugly appearance upon close inspection.

Take, for instance, our Nietzschean industrialist F. W. Bennet. Joe says of him: "I had expected not to like [him]. But he was insane. How could I resist that? There was a manic energy of his, a mad light in his eye. He was free! That was what free men were like, they shone their freedom on everyone." Later on, in the discussion quoted before, Bennet advises Joe: "Just be sure you have the guts. So that if you have to steal or take a sap to someone's head for a meal, you'll be able to. Every kind of life has its demands . . ." This is so appealing to Joe, and Joe is so appealing to Bennet, that they come together in the end in a kind of homosexual, metaphysical union. Says Joe, ". . . he will thank me, thank me for growing in his heart his heart bursting his son." Later: "He [Joe] pulls himself up on the float and stands panting in the sun, his glistening white young body inhaling the light, the sun healing my [Joe's] scars my cracked bones my lacerated soul, the sun powering my loins warming them to stir . . . Up on the hill Bennet stands on his terrace, a tiny man totally attentive. He has seen the whole thing, as I knew he would. He waves at me. I smile my white teeth. I wave back." Bennet adopts Joe, who becomes, we are told in the last line of the biography that concludes the book, "Master of Loon Lake."

Susan Sontag would be screaming "FASCISM" by now. I make it a point, however, never to introduce such loaded terms into a discussion. Still, one thing is for certain, Doctorow couldn't be more in vogue with his dismal picture of predatory human relationships.

Hollywood will love it. □

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Choices & Self-Definition

Linda Gray Sexton: ***Between Two Worlds: Young Women in Crisis;*** **William Morrow & Co.; New York.**

Robert May: ***Sex and Fantasy: Patterns of Male and Female Development;*** **W. W. Norton & Co.; New York.**

by Christina Murphy

That sex roles form the parameters of individual identity and the nexus between private and public selves is a premise to which both Linda Gray Sexton in *Between Two Worlds: Young Women in Crisis* and Robert May in *Sex and Fantasy: Patterns of Male and Female Development* adhere. Each author, however, arrives at this philosophical perspective via a different analytical journey.

Linda Gray Sexton's intent is to write a sociohistory of the generation of women born between 1945 and 1955, a generation which she perceives as stranded between the complexities and demands of the femin*ine* mystique and the femin*ist* mystique. To these women, coming of age while the traditional feminine mystique of marriage and motherhood waned and feminism's counter-demands of independence, careers and achievement reached ascendancy, the world presented a difficult jumble of shifting values and contradictory expectations. Making sense of the contradictions and finding a sense of personal direction amidst this conflict of values constitute the "crisis" Sexton feels these young women face.

From interviews with fifty women, Sexton has culled the fifteen she considers most representative of the women isolated "between two worlds." Included in the sample are "like mother, like daughter" women who adhered to the middle-class paradigm of wifehood and motherhood, "maverick" women who chose the middle road of marriage and a career, and "self-made" women who eschewed traditional roles entirely and sought fulfillment in achievement. Not surprisingly, Sexton finds a measure of dissatisfaction among all three categories of lives, based largely upon her own statement in the book's introductory chapter that the recognition of choices is the deepest disillusionment and the strongest limitation an individual encounters in structuring a personal identity. With what might appear to some as the rawest of romanticism, Sexton states of her generation: ". . . we simply weren't interested in hearing about necessary choices. We needed to believe it was all possible—career, marriage, and motherhood."

Given this simplistic beginning, it is not difficult to envision what Sexton's philosophical terminus will be: the realization that there are necessary choices, that they are difficult to make and that they are, at once, both self-enriching and self-limiting. Predictably, Sexton concludes about the women of her generation:

> There are, I believe, many of us spread far and wide across America who all feel a little lost and insecure about where we are headed, about where we have been. As two warring worlds give birth to a new composite, confusion is inevitable. Sooner or later, we all wind up beached on the island of indecision. I take solace in the notion that if we stop to listen, if we stand still, quiet, under the dark night sky, we will hear a cacophony of voices, the cry of others who have learned that to choose is to live.

"To choose is to live." Is this news? Sexton contends that it is with regard to her generation of women because "for the first time in history there are no longer any clear-cut social mores that dictate who we are supposed to be, no economic circumstances which force us to struggle toward specific goals."

While this is an interesting thesis, it is, at best, a shell game, a philosophical smoke screen obscuring some very fundamental truths. These women are not facing history so much as they are facing reality. Their supposed historical "crisis" is no more than the typical disillusionment all people (not just women) in all generations (not just the magical one of 1945-55) undergo in confronting the fact of their own personal limitations and their mortality. In any human life, not all is possible, only some. Deciding what that some will be and structuring one's life so that as much of that some as possible can be attained constitute the core of coming to terms with reality and of mastering one's own identity. To suggest that these women are somehow undergoing a process unique in history is both specious and pretentious. The types of choices available to women have indeed changed since the advent of feminism, but that single reality in itself does not alter, nor should it obscure, the fact that choice is still choice and choice, in pursuit of self-definition, is still an arduous and self-initiated process. To suggest otherwise by reference to historicity seems a rather blatant misperception of both the "crisis" these young women face and of the human condition itself.

While Sexton invests portraits of individual lives with philosophical significance, Robert May, in *Sex and Fantasy: Patterns of Male and Female Development,* is confidently at work in the fields of the quantifiable. While Sexton's book fails to live up to its subtitle, May's fails to live up to its title. The book is decidedly more about the patterns of male and female development than it is about sex and fantasy. In fact, sex and fantasy remain largely a peripheral topic, given one scant,

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twenty-page chapter alone, while May goes about the process of endeavoring to convince the reader that sex differences are real and have a measurable and predictable impact upon individuals, societies and cultures.

Taking his lead from classical mythology, May states that the myth of Phaeton, in which a young man endeavors to attain the power of the gods and reaps only destruction, is a typically male fantasy pattern, while the myth of Demeter and Persephone, with its themes of emotional attachment and loss, is "an archetypal myth of women." Male fantasy patterns tend to reflect "basically aggressive urges" and to manifest what May labels "deprivation"—stories of "soaring strength ending in destruction" and representing "such negative things as suffering, failure, obscurity, or disappointment." Female fantasy patterns, on the other hand, reflect what May calls "enhancement"—stories which move "from pain to pleasure, from difficulty, effort, and doubt to success and reunion" and which represent such elements as "success, joy, eminence, and pleasure." May bases this broad (some would say sweeping) conclusion upon the fantasy patterns manifested in stories people made up in response to one picture—that of a man and a woman on a trapeze—in the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). Ten separate studies, May reports, have shown that stories told by men tend to move from enhancement to deprivation, while stories told by women tend to move from deprivation to enhancement.

The evidence seems clear and irrefutable—that is, until May begins to add the general caveats and refinements that are the researcher's stock and trade—the results do tend to vary according to the age, socioeconomic class, ideology (feminists scoring differently on deprivation/enhancement scales than nonfeminists), educational levels, and sexual preferences (homosexuals scoring differently than heterosexuals) of the participants. Scores on the deprivation/enhancement scale were even affected by whether a woman was a nursing mother at the time she took the test. After the smoke has cleared, May is found to qualify his once rock-hard stances into such concluding statements as: "On the evidence so far we can comfortably say that" . . . "with rather less assurance we think that" . . . "so out of these empirical studies there has emerged at least an outline of a coherent picture . . . but the picture is a complex one." To indicate exactly how complex the picture is, May moves to a fine-grained look at the issue by examining "the complex interiors of an individual life." What follows is a case-history analysis of the life of Jonathan W. Langly, III and of the life of Janet Lauder. From the evidence presented in these two lives—of neurotic individuals with atypical backgrounds—one is supposed to generalize into agreeing with May that there is such a thing as a characteristically male and a characteristically female sexual fantasy pattern. This, despite the fact that the "evidence" is skimpy and highly subjective and the very obvious difficulty that two lives do not a theory make.

From this point on, the book reaches its zenith or its nadir, depending upon whether one was interested in learning of sex and fantasy or patterns of male and female development, for the focus of the book dramatically shifts into an investigation of whether a case can be made for gender-or sex-based differences in human personalities. May concludes that a case most definitely can be made that biochemistry, if not anatomy, is destiny, and that, therefore, "the dream of androgyny" is one of feminism's most illusory and nonsensical fabrications.

Perhaps this part of May's theorizing would be interesting (the 118 pages that lead to this conclusion) were it not for the fact that it offers nothing new and reads like a rehash of Freudian and Jungian theory. The final portions of the book represent a compendium of quotations from other scholars and bits and chunks of data from a variety of sources. The final sections would work well if they were intended to be a digest of research on the subject; as presently structured, they seem but a tedious and unenlightening compilation of information from a variety of disciplines. Aside, perhaps, from reader convenience, what is the purpose, one might wonder, of restating information already available in other places? Were May an insightful elucidator of data, perhaps the book would be more interesting and convincing. Were May himself an innovative theorist, perhaps the book would not seem so heavily laden with minutiae, restatements and digressions and would prove far more illuminating about the human condition than it does. Since May is neither of these, the book is neither interesting nor illuminating but seems, instead, poorly organized and insubstantial.

In the Mail

Brains, Machines & Persons **by Donald M. MacKay; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Grand Rapids, Michigan.** An inquiry into the relationship of science, man and religion.

"The Soviet Gas Deal and Its Threat to the West" by Dr. Miles Costick and Marc Dean Millot; Institute on Strategic Trade; Washington, D.C. A thorough analysis of possible Western dependence on Soviet energy sources.

"People & Ideas: Public Opinion About Business"; Institute for Humane Studies; Menlo Park, California. A booklet describing the public-opinion problems of American business and the role of the Institute for Humane Studies in solving that problem.

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It is difficult to see how either of these two books will add much to society's understanding of the complexities of sex roles and of gender-based personal identities. Sexton's book has a decidedly *Little Women* air to it and seems to work best as a primer for exceedingly naive adolescents who have not yet heard of existentialism or of Sartre's dictate that "we are our choices." Indeed, that such a book could even be written in a post-existentialist era is in itself a wonder; apparently, and incredibly, Sexton feels that she is the first to discover that free will is an essential component of the search for self-definition and that she must bring this startling discovery to the women of her generation. While Sexton's book occasionally redeems itself through the vitality of her portraits of individual lives, May's book reads like the first draft of an ill-conceived Ph.D. dissertation and is just about as illuminating. May appears to be a competent statistician and researcher, but statistics and data tossed upon the page do not, in themselves, provide answers to complex social issues. This inability to synthesize information into broad patterns of insight lies at the heart of the failure of each book to master its subject and to provide a meaningful experience for the reader. For all the information presented and for all the words expended, both books remain largely chaff. This is indeed unfortunate, for the subject matter they cover and the issues they delineate are truly significant ones, a just explication of which would prove most beneficial to individuals in confronting the social milieus which shape individual lives and identities. In both instances, what was needed by Sexton and May was the deft hand of the philosopher; what remains, instead, is the eye of the researcher, spotting the problem and pinpointing its essence but unable to elaborate upon its implications. Sexton and May prove adequate at demarcating the target but must leave to analysts more insightful and gifted than they the task of hitting the bull's-eye. □

Oily Politics

J. B. Kelly: *Arabia, the Gulf and the West;* Basic Books; New York.

by Alan J. Levine

J. B. Kelly has given the Western world a scholarly account of how it put itself at the mercy—or the lack of mercy—of a bunch of midget despotisms. Let us hope that those trying to get us out of this miserable position will read this exceptionally well-written book. Despite his depressing subject, Kelly manages to lighten the task of the reader, for he often indulges in humor and irony at the expense of our Middle Eastern friends and the people who have imagined themselves to be "leading" the Western industrial world. He supplies excellent brief descriptions of the various Gulf states and their past relations with the West, primarily with Great Britain. As Kelly points out, Britain's Indian colonial government established a paramount position on the Iranian and Arabian coasts long before the development of the internal-combustion engine and oil; they were concerned with suppressing piracy, internecine warfare and slave trade among the local peoples. Mostly, however, he concentrates on the dismal story of the end of the British regime, as well as the not-unconnected tale of the rise of OPEC.

Dr. Levine is a frequent contributor to these pages.

The end of the British position in Arabia and the Gulf was yet another fateful step in Britain's retreat, not only from empire, but also from a major role in the world. Strictly speaking, it was two steps, though only briefly separated ones.

The first move was Britain's withdrawal from Aden Colony and the South Arabian protectorates, now the "People's Democratic Republic of Yemen" or "South Yemen." Unlike previous British departures from their colonies, this move did not even pretend to turn the area over to responsible democratic groups. In 1967 the British literally backed out behind a screen of guns, leaving Aden to a bunch of bloodthirsty fanatics (heavily infiltrated by communists) who were already slaughtering rival nationalist groups. (In 1969 the communists succeeded in seizing complete control of South Yemen; some 200,000 persons have since fled the country.) This step was taken not out of any sort of principle, or as a considered strategic decision, but because it was fashionable to retreat and to cut defense budgets. In January 1968 the same sort of "thinking" led to a blunder which may prove fatal to the West: the decision to end all British commitments "East of Suez," including those to the oil-producing Gulf states. The British persisted with this incredibly foolish decision despite the fact that the Gulf sheiks, already enormously wealthy from oil, were willing to pay Britain the twelve million pounds annually needed to keep British forces in the area, and despite the steady growth of Soviet influence and military strength in the Middle East after the Six Day War of June 1967. After sharply criticizing this decision, the British Conservatives failed to reverse it when they returned to power in 1970. If these remarks seem harsh, they are mild compared to J. B. Kelly's comment on the Wilson-Heath era: "Never, perhaps in British history, has the reputation of Britain in the world been brought so low as it has been in the last dozen years or so."

The departure of Western power dovetailed with and encouraged the retreat of the Western oil interests before the OPEC cartel which, even before

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1973, seized control of the pricing of oil. With a puckish sense of humor, Kelly notes that back in 1960 one of OPEC's earliest demands was for the oil companies to "maintain their prices steady and free from all unnecessary fluctuations." Many people, understandably, do not like the oil companies, and they have misbehaved, with government connivance, in the past. ARAMCO and its American connections fed the American government and public silly propaganda, and in the 1950's the U.S. government winked at ARAMCO arrangements that amounted to systematic tax evasion. The record, however, shows that the interests of the industrial countries—and for that matter, those backward countries not lucky enough to be sitting on oil—were safer in the hands of those big corporations than with the OPEC cartel. Indeed, they were safer with the companies than with Western diplomats. In their dealings with OPEC, Kelly shows, the oil companies were not always correct, but their conduct compares favorably with that of the Western governments, whose representatives were infected by Arabophile delusions and an exaggerated respect for the late Shah of Iran. According to Kelly, the behavior of James Akins (of our State Department, later Ambassador to Saudi Arabia), in particular, borders on pathological. The oil companies received no effective support from the Western governments. The already-inordinate profits derived from oil soon became extortionate. In 1970 the oil companies operating in the Middle East received $1,685,000,000 in profits, the oil states $4,500,000,000. By 1974, the oil companies received $1,516,000,000, the oil states *$76,500,000,000!* The price per barrel bears no relationship to the cost of production.

With some partial exceptions in the cases of the United States, the Netherlands and West Germany, the Western countries completely lost their heads when the Arab oil embargo hit and OPEC initiated the really big price jumps in 1973. The British and French regimes—one hesitates to dignify them with the term government—made their predecessors at Munich look good. Both countries tried to make separate deals with the Arabs at the expense of their European allies and Israel, and they unsuccessfully tried to coerce the oil companies into providing their countries with fuel at the expense of their neighbors. The results for the West have been observable to all—astronomical prices for oil, supplies at the mercy of hostile or unstable regimes threatened by approaching Soviet guns. This reviewer has often had hostile thoughts about the oil companies, but since 1973 such feelings are a bit like denouncing the proprietor of a lemonade stand for overcharging while averting one's eyes from the Mafia.

"Mr. Kelly's work is neither a balanced survey nor an impartial guide, but a very partisan essay with a particular argument."

—New York Times

One of the most interesting features of Kelly's book is his treatment of the countries now reaping, or robbing, this harvest. Unlike many Westerners, Kelly does not praise the boot that kicks him; he does not even pretend to be friendly. While perhaps short of facts and figures—which, Kelly warns us, are unreliable in this region—he paints a surprisingly uniform picture. A large amount of the wealth streaming to the Persian Gulf has disappeared in corruption or been misappropriated. The impressive development programs of these countries almost invariably hide a disappointing reality. Investment has been badly balanced, invariably ignoring agriculture (a mistake Kelly believes was fatal to the Shah) while too much has been put into housing, public buildings and armaments. Heavy or basic industry has been neglected in favor of consumer goods and light industry; what heavy industry has been installed may well prove uncompetitive with that of the advanced countries. Though Kelly carefully avoids prophecy, the implication of his analysis is that these countries will not modernize themselves successfully in the foreseeable future. Quite aside from this, he warns, they will remain authoritarian, if not totalitarian, and are likely to be fundamentally hostile to and contemptuous of the Western world. (On the record, they certainly have reason to be contemptuous.) The future of the Middle East will remain what it has been, "a tragicomedy of despotism in countless acts." Moreover, these regimes will be unreliable, unstable and at each other's throats. The weapons they have acquired—the sale of which Kelly considers one of the West's worst blunders—will not defend them against a major power. His prediction that they will suffice only to do harm to themselves and to the oil installations has already been vindicated by the Iran-Iraq war.

Our government's response to the deteriorating situation has been to rely on alliances with Iran and Saudi Arabia. The fate of the Iranian "pillar" so beloved by both Nixon and Carter is well known, and Kelly deems the Saudi one just as shaky. Kelly regards the Shah as largely to blame for his own downfall, though he suggests that Iranian tradition and attitudes were bound to sabotage any modernization program. The Shah's faults, however, seem to have been those of the other Gulf rulers writ large, though Kelly's account may be an eye-opener for those who naively look back on the Shah as a reliable friend of the West. In addition to promoting OPEC, the Shah worked hard to eliminate the British from the Gulf. He objected to our government's prudent decision to station a very small force in the Gulf. The Shah as a fiend, however, did not really exist either. Kelly deems SAVAK (the Shah's secret police) a rather mild-mannered bunch, given the traditional approach to such

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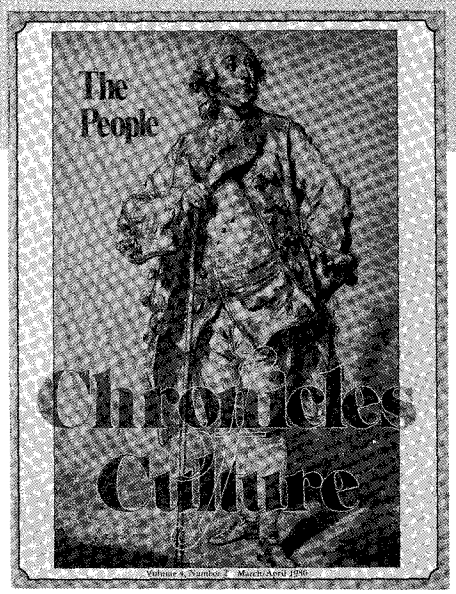
". . . a solid intellectual approach which deserves attention."

—LIBRARY JOURNAL



John F. Lulves, Jr., Executive Vice President, Intercollegiate Studies Institute, Inc., about the *Chronicles of Culture* . . .

"The *Chronicles of Culture* has established an excellent reputation for its ongoing and devastating critique of the liberal orthodoxy that continues to be dominant in cultural matters. Be it books, films, trends, education, criticism—*Chronicles* has been there with good, succinct writing and a clear eye."

Chronicles of Culture is a literary journal of opinion published bimonthly by The Rockford Institute.

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matters in Iran. The Shah's predecessors were often devoted exponents of the pyramid-of-skulls school of statesmanship.

Kelly perhaps overdoes his theme of the unchanging East. He is apt to reason a bit too facilely from precedent and to ignore or minimize the impact of the modern world on the Middle East and the ability of its peoples at least partly to adapt to it. We are told, for example, that the Iranian army has never fought well in the past, and Iran has never had a navy; therefore, Kelly seems to assume, they cannot and will not fight now, or learn to handle modern weapons. Yet the Iranian army has fought much better against Iraq than Kelly and others expected. Although Kelly does present good reasons for thinking that the present policies of the Gulf rulers will not lead to successful modernization of their countries, he perhaps dismisses the possibility too readily. Unfortunately, his arguments for believing that if the Middle East ever catches up with the West and Japan it will be as an enemy rather than as a friend seem all too sound.

In the short run, however, Kelly is absolutely convincing in arguing that the Saudi regime cannot be depended on any more than the Shah's. He also takes a very bleak view of the economic effects of the OPEC drain on the West. It is probable, he thinks, that the West will eventually be forced to intervene militarily to prevent the total disruption of oil supplies by local conflicts, another oil embargo or a Soviet threat to the Gulf. This is a very unpleasant prospect, and one that could have been avoided had Western leaders exhibited some nerve and sense in dealing with the Gulf and the oil cartel. □

Marginal People

Margaret Drabble: *The Middle Ground;* Alfred A. Knopf; New York.

Gilbert Sorrentino: *Aberration of Starlight;* Random House; New York.

by Robert C. Steensma

Fifty years ago T. S. Eliot spoke of his generation as "the hollow men . . . the stuffed men" in a "dead land . . . cactus land." Now Kate Armstrong, the central figure in Margaret Drabble's latest novel, surveys her circle of friends and describes them aptly as "marginal people," a set of confused and meaningless characters who are quite at home in the wasteland of modern culture as it is usually portrayed in contemporary British and American fiction.

Such an appraisal of society's beautiful people may be heresy in the eyes of the high priests of modern criticism, but it fits precisely the characters not only of Miss Drabble's *The Middle Ground* but also those of Gilbert Sorrentino's *Aberration of Starlight,* both of which will probably evoke ecstatic squeals from the critical establishment. In each of these novels we meet people who are, for the most part, entirely bereft of any moral or spiritual moorings—and who don't really care.

Miss Drabble gives us Mrs. Armstrong, the journalistic darling of the militant British feminists, a woman nervously approaching middle age ("the middle ground") and anxiously examining the baggage she has accumulated on her rise to the top: a divorce, an abortion, a circle of chic friends with too much leisure and too few brains, and a panting femlib audience which greets every new article with mindless applause.

She has drifted with the modern current, pouring out her facile pieces (probably just right for *Ms., Cosmo* or their British clones) about "babies and menstruation and male-chauvinist pigs and whole-meal foods and London life in all its tawdry monotony." But as one of her precious friends tells her in a moment of drunken honesty, she has "an unerring eye for the crap." True radical feminist that she is, she is convinced that "every bad thing that's happened to me happened to me because I'm a woman. There's no point in pretending it's not so." Whatever can't be blamed on men must be attributed to childhood: "No doubt it all had something to do with the anal phase, whatever that was. And pot training. Wasn't homosexuality supposed to have something to do with that too?"

But despite her successes as a writer, she becomes dissatisfied with her life for reasons which the author never makes intelligible. She confesses that "I thought I was a revolutionary, but I'm not . . . I used to enjoy the smell of battle, but I've got sick of it, I'm really sick of it. I'm worn out." Since her private life has degenerated into a series of sour love affairs with sexual losers, love is no longer "a journey, an adventure, an essay of hope," but rather "an infection, a ritual, a drama with a bloody last act."

Having made the fatal mistake of the feminist in believing that a woman can find fulfillment only in a career (even if it's clerking in a five-and-dime) but never in family or a relationship with a man, she discovers suddenly that the war against male chauvinism no longer arouses her. She decides what she wants:

> No more headlines, no more underlinings, no more stories about Women of Our Times. No wonder those women in Rowley didn't fit into a pattern. Why the hell should they? Enough of patterns. She'd spent enough time looking for patterns and trends. Hugo was right, she'd get nowhere if she spent the rest of her life forcing things into articles and programmes when they didn't want to be forced. Shapeless diversity, what was wrong with that?

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Her fixations about men, women and the world begin to change as the ennui of her professional success wears away the scars over the old wounds of her personal life.

Ironically, she finally learns something about herself and life, not from the feminists or her liberated friends, but from several men who have moved on the fringes of her life. Hugo, an amputee writer and friend, teaches her perseverance and how to move on to new horizons when old ones fade. Her son Mark is everything that feminists deny is possible in a man: gentleness, love, understanding, concern. Most paradoxically of all, Mujid, the Iraqi whom Kate and her smart friends have never tried to understand, proves by a simple gift what being human is all about.

Thus Kate learns what many women have come to realize—that true feminine liberation is to be found outside the narrow inquisitorial orthodoxy of the gospel according to Steinem, Abzug, Millett and Greer. Unfortunately these are points that we must extrapolate from the novel, for Miss Drabble is content merely to imply (and the point will irritate many feminist readers) that the women's movement is basically flawed in some of its fundamental assumptions. One can hope that she will move on to deal with the implications she has raised in *The Middle Ground.*

Gilbert Sorrentino's *Aberration of Starlight,* on the other hand, is simply pretentious and hopeless, both as a piece of fiction and as a statement of any consequence. To call it a novel would be misleading, for Sorrentino obviously intended it to be an antinovel, in this case nothing more than a formless, incoherent and tasteless farrago about the sexual hangups and lecherous incompetence of a group of—"marginal" would be too kind a word—forgettable people living in a seedy New Jersey boarding house for about thirty-six hours in the summer of 1939. More simply, the story concerns the clumsy attempts of Tom Thebus, easily the dumbest salesman in literature since Willie Loman, to get Marie Recco, a neurotic divorcée, out of her clothes and into the back seat of his car. His attempts to seduce Marie are complicated by the presence of Billy (her cross-eyed son) and her goatish, foul-tempered and bumbling father, John McGrath.

Sorrentino's story is muddled right from the beginning (with four pedantic epigraphs in three languages) to its whimpering close. By means of sexual fantasies, boring and slangy letters which tell little, interviews which go nowhere, disconnected fragments of dialogue, and footnotes (yes—footnotes!), the author describes, *ad nauseam,* the same meager episodes from four points of view. The rapid and confusing shifts in perspective, the dislocations in style and tone, the redundancy of plot may very well define the trendy antinovel, but they do nothing for the reader in search of a character.

After all this literary horseplay, there's really not much left. We're supposed to laugh at the neovirginal doubts of Marie as she fights off the hot-handed Tom, at John McGrath as he leers at the German widow, and even at poor ten-year-old Billy. But the laughter will not come. Rather than being funny, Sorrentino is merely being cruel at the expense of characters whose lives are as trivial as the popular songs, fifth-rate poetry and scruffy thoughts by which they measure out their days.

If a theme is to be found, it might be hidden in the most profound and stylistically striking sentence in the whole book: "Time wounds all heels," as Marie reminds her ex-husband. Perhaps Sorrentino intended the burden of the book to be carried by a final epigraph—"The meanest bloody thing in hell made this world"—but unfortunately this has as little relationship to what happens in the book as the title and the other epigraphs.

Thus *The Middle Ground* and *Aberration of Starlight* suffer from failed aspirations. Miss Drabble has aimed at a realistic portrayal of the dissatisfactions of an aging feminist, while Sorrentino attempts to satirize a group of pathetic misfits. But both realism and satire start with a human reference point, and if the realist or the satirist cannot provide us with characters who engage our attention, evoke our sympathy or invite our anger, we will remain skeptical. For all the good intentions of both Miss Drabble and Mr. Sorrentino, the people of these two novels are marginal in their vitality as human beings and marginal in their usefulness to us. But as such they reflect the world in which their authors choose to set them. □

"Aberration of Starlight is a disciplined and achieved work, perhaps Sorrentino's best novel . . ."

—*The New Republic*

Human Concerns in America

Parade, the Sunday supplement to family newspapers, has a famed department, "Personality Parade," in which it furnishes America with momentous "facts," "opinions" and "truths"—according to its own credit line. We can read there:

Q. How much will it cost Michael Landon, 44, star of "Little House on the Prairie," if he dumps his wife for Cindy Clerico, 22?

A. After 18 years of marriage and four children, Landon—according to divorce lawyers—will have to settle at least $5 million on his wife Lynn in community property, possibly much more.

Succinct, businesslike, crystal clear. No unanswered questions, no doubts, no hesitations. If you have $5 million or more, dumping a wife does not pose any other problems. The free press in America won't let you go uninformed. □

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Dreams Adulterated by Propaganda

Studs Terkel: *American Dreams Lost and Found;* Pantheon Books; New York.

by Mike Lavelle

A tape recorder, selective interviews and selective editing can be the ingredients of a pop sociology and a best-selling book. Studs Terkel is neither an author nor a sociopolitical sage, though he is celebrated as both by the liberal media eager for a reflection of their liberal views. Studs Terkel *is* a clever propagandist with a merchant's eye and a pseudo-Marxist feel for the *Zeitgeist.*

He is much aware of the media fondness for fads. In the first chapter of *American Dreams Lost and Found,* Terkel pays homage to the feminist disdain for the beauty contest. We meet a former beauty queen (Miss U.S.A. 1973) who, in retrospect, discovers that: "For many girls who enter the contest, it's part of the American Dream. It was never mine." She also compares herself to a table lamp and proclaims that she hates to curl her hair. *Ms.* magazine and Phil Donahue couldn't have said it better. If she had said, "Gee whiz. I loved it," she wouldn't have been in Terkel's book.

We meet a labor organizer who says of the mid-30's, "Here we had the richest country in the world, and we were hungry. At least people were not going hungry in the Soviet Union." In the mid-30's, Stalin's program of forced collectivization and slaughter of the kulaks (small farmers) caused a massive famine in the Soviet Union which was responsible for the deaths of approximately 15 million people. No questions, no history lesson from Studs Terkel.

We are introduced to an American Indian woman who connects the My Lai massacre of the Vietnam war with the Indian wars of the last century. Evil America catches it again. There is no mention by Studs Terkel of the genocide in Cambodia undertaken by the Khmer Rouge nor of the totalitarian hammer atomizing Vietnam nor the general conditions of present-day Southeast Asia. In fact, in this book of interviews collected and edited by Studs Terkel, Vietnam is hardly mentioned and only then with a left-wing perspective, and without even the slightest attempt at objectification, which could adjust the perspective in light of what has happened during the last five years.

Since 1975, thousands of Southeast Asian refugees have settled in America. It's a safe assumption that they could give some stunning insights into the American Dream and the totalitarian nightmare that they fled. There is not one Vietnamese, Cambodian or Laotian refugee who appears in this book. Can anyone imagine a book entitled *American Dreams Lost and Found* written between 1945 and 1950 without even one interview with a European émigré concerning his impressions of America and his memories of Nazi horrors? Such a book would have been ignored and/or silently scorned (rightly so) by book reviewers and by the mass media. But today, the media have shifted so far to the left that an Orwellian corruption of history by omission gets a further Orwellian twist by not even having that omission noted by fawning TV interviewers or newspeak book reviewers. Certainly a book of 470 pages with 101 interviews of Americans from all strata of society should have included at least one Southeast Asian refugee. It's amazing that the liberals who are constantly blathering about the "people's right to know" seem to feel that we don't need to know what "peace" has brought to Southeast Asia.

Studs Terkel does more than merely compile selective voyeuristic collections of interviews for his various books. He has been associated with the media for well over 30 years as an actor, music critic and currently as a talk-show host on WFMT in Chicago. I have seen him operate before a college audience and damn near convince them that the working class in America was storming the socialist gates to utopia. His books *Working, Division Street* and *American Dreams* were the backdrops—the expertise. The college kids, eager for contact with the "real world," would be satisfied with a counterfeit reality and even more so when their professors told them that this vox populi guru had his finger on the grassroots pulse of America. The Terkel patter is a mix of socialist Michael Harrington and circus showman P. T. Barnum. Abbie Hoffman, still scratching at his diaper rash, referred to Terkel as "My good buddy" on a Chicago ("Kup's Show") TV program.

I have listened to the Studs Terkel show on WFMT for a good part of the last ten years and I have rarely heard an original idea expressed by him or by any of his guests. The program is partially funded by public tax dollars, but the public is seldom represented. What is primarily heard is a constant repetition of the same theme: an exercise in how many ways to say socialism without naming it and how to preach national pacifism without mentioning the consequences of Auschwitz, Vorkuta, Cambodia, Munich and Yalta. No dissent to Terkel's view is ever heard; complaints are simply handled with the claim of "Studs's free and inquiring spirit."

Yet the politics of Terkel are very much out of sync with those of the group

"Terkel knows where to find America . . ."
—*Commonweal*

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he pretends to represent—that is, the American lower-middle class. He is on the editorial board and is part-owner of the shrillest weekly of the intellectual left, *The Nation,* an associate of *In These Times,* a Chicago-based socialist weekly, and a founding father of the Barry Commoner Citizens Party, which did not have enough citizens to get more than 0.27% of the vote in the recent election. If those are convincing credentials, then Terkel indeed has his finger on the grassroots pulse.

One cliché oft used by Terkel while plugging his latest book on the talk-show circuit is that people tell him after he has interviewed them, "I didn't know I felt that way." The self-serving implication of Terkel's comment implies that he has somehow plumbed some mysterious psychic depth of which even his subjects were unaware. That's not necessarily so. I was interviewed by Terkel and appeared as Mike LeFever in the first chapter of his book, *Working.* I came across as dispirited and bitter. It's how I felt at that particular moment. I felt different a week later, and a year later more different still. At the time of the interview (1971) I was working as a laborer in a steel plant and there were rumors that it was going to close down. (It did.) I had a grammar-school education, was 38 years old, had two kids to take care of and no prospects for the future. Mix well with a few shots of bourbon, a few beers and a seemingly sympathetic presence and the bitter feelings just pour out with no attention paid to the tape recorder. It makes for good journalistic copy and it might be great for pop sociologists, but in the ebb and flow of human currents it's nothing to count on as a statistic or even as a set feeling or trend. A nurse's aide, in the same book, was portrayed as a gum-popping teenager with a heart that was cold and indifferent to the pains and imminent deaths of her patients. Later, this young lady went on to become a very warm and dedicated registered nurse. About five years after *Working* was published, it toured as a stage play. I was portrayed as a violent hardhat brute and the nurse as cynical and cruel. No matter the years of change—the play, the counterfeit reality and the bucks to be made were the important thing.

The American Dream is a vision that is constantly changing and being redefined. America shines all the brighter when compared to the totalitarian systems which challenge it. A book is desperately needed to trumpet the virtues of America—its dreams dreamt and delivered. *American Dreams: Lost and Found* is not that book. Its author simply chooses to ignore the history of our time and, consequently, his own subject. He thus falsifies the very reality he proposes to examine. □

Grand Allusions

Lewis Lapham: *Fortune's Child: A Portrait of the United States as Spendthrift Heir;* Doubleday; New York.

by John O'Sullivan

Two books are here reviewed under the one title. There is the book by Mr. Lapham and the book which Mr. Lapham imagines he has written. We glimpse the imaginary book first in the introduction when Mr. Lapham tells us that he has written a series of essays around the theme that after World War II "the heirs to the American fortune got into the habit of thinking of themselves as rich kids." And in several of the subsequent essays he presents America as a spendthrift heir so rich that he believes nothing can harm him and thus indulges in every wastrel delusion from revolution to "creativity."

To say that Mr. Lapham develops this metaphor would be a rash understatement. One has at times the impression of watching a 1950's science-fiction movie in which the metaphor escapes from its laboratory restraints, grows to monstrous size, assaults innocent bystanders and in general terrorizes the neighborhood. No person or thing American is safe from its depredations. Any sort of behavior whatsoever is likely to be seen by it as a vice characteristic of great wealth. In his discussion of U.S. foreign policy, for instance, Mr. Lapham states that "the young heir undertook to invade Asia and to provide guns and wheat and computer technology to any beggar who stopped him in the street and asked him for a coin." Three pages later, however, we are told that "the United States doesn't take the trouble to notice much of what goes on in the world's servant quarters." Among the metaphor's victims are Mr. Lapham and his writing: suddenly, at the slightest provocation, he will abandon a promising argument and fall to pondering darkly about wealth and its malefactions as if responding to signals transmitted from the metaphor's spaceship. Whether Americans act cautiously or recklessly, generously or meanly, innocently or corruptly, there is the metaphor in the shadows, waiting to pounce.

As a rule, comprehensive indictments should make us wonder. Are all Americans so guilty? But as the book wears on, it emerges that, in the main, Mr. Lapham has a smaller target than the entire United States in his sights. He is aiming at members of the upper-administrative middle class who are to be found in Congress, the bureaucracy, the large foundations, the prestige newspapers and the higher reaches of corporate life. To this group Mr. Lapham gives the classical name of "the equestrian class." In Shaw's *Heartbreak House* Lady Utterwood remarks that "there are only two classes in good English society—the equestrian

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class and the neurotic class." But in Mr. Lapham's vision of American society, the equestrian class is neurotic as well. It invades small Southeast Asian countries and dabbles ineffectually in free-verse composition; it has an unreflecting faith in the omnipotence of technology and makes films celebrating a fashionable despair about the possibility of progress; it hunts foxes to the strains of Stockhausen.

Something odd is clearly going on. Mr. Lapham is able to attribute inconsistencies amounting to schizophrenia to this class by means of a simple rhetorical device: he treats all of its members—from Jane Fonda to William Simon—as much of a muchness. This mental habit becomes explicit in his revealing essay on the Ford Foundation energy report, where he describes a ferocious disagreement between the head of Mobil Oil, Mr. Tavoulareas, and the project's director, Mr. David Freeman, and goes on to comment loftily:

> I had assumed that all these gentlemen would recognize a common, even a national, interest. Without exception they belonged to the American ruling class; they enjoyed equivalent degrees of status and lived in the same well-lighted suburbs of Washington, New York, Pittsburgh, Boston and San Francisco . . . yet so many of them apparently had been reduced to calling each other names, as if they had been walking around in the rain with political placards instead of sitting across conference tables from one another.

Here is a writer positively striving to be taken in by appearances. How do we recognize a member of his equestrian class? Quite simply. He has a secretary, rides in a comfortable car, duly notes the memoranda that cross his desk and attends cocktail parties where he discusses relief for Cambodia, the forthcoming OPEC negotiations and other topics of the day. If two such men fall to violent argument over something, Mr. Lapham thinks them guilty of the crass delusion that some point of theory can be as important as the lifestyle that unites them.

But the fallacy underlying this patrician outlook can be unearthed by a simple question: how would Mr. Lapham classify Adolf Eichmann? He sat at a desk, dictated memoranda to his secretary, etc., etc. To anyone uninterested in the purposes of those memoranda, he must seem indistinguishable from a social-security clerk. Yet we would not think that a clerk who objected to the comparison was simply looking at things from the wrong end of his In-tray. We would surely be more inclined to criticize Mr. Lapham for adopting a theory of high superficiality. And he confirms this charge when he remarks, from his pinnacle of superiority, that "President Nixon . . . in his wooden-minded and literal way, believed that there was something more to government than the shifting of scenes." Did he indeed, poor fellow? And we thought him so shrewd.

There is, of course, something more to government than the shifting of scenes. As the boat people will testify, there is the shifting of people, for one thing. Yet, at various points throughout the book, Mr. Lapham retreats from serious argument and political controversy into lofty paradoxes, into convenient fictions, i.e. his equestrian class with its manifest common interests, and, of course, into the embrace of his all-encompassing metaphor.

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles of Culture:*

Our Elders

"On the third of January 1981, the great scholar Eric Voegelin passed his eighth decade. The event was discreetly celebrated by the 'inside circle' and by a second *Festschrift* which collects more than twenty essays in his honor. Yet, despite the general acclaim of his *oeuvre*, Voegelin is an ambiguous philosopher, which is not rare among German scholars and thinkers: Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger have created controversies around their thought, and their disciples have even split into two camps, 'left' and 'right,' i.e. nihilist vs. constructive, realist vs. existentialist."

from the guest editorial by Thomas Molnar

Also:

Opinions & Views—Commendables—In Focus
Waste of Money—Perceptibles
The American Proscenium—Stage—Screen—Art—Music—Correspondence—Liberal Culture Journalism

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In short, we have to lament the metaphor's literary and political influence. To write an entire book around such a theme would be to cram truth into an ill-fitting straitjacket; and it is greatly to Mr. Lapham's credit that he has written nothing of the sort. What he has done is something less pretentious and more interesting—namely, he has collected a number of his favorite essays down the years, mostly from his own magazine, *Harper's,* pressed them between hard covers and given the result a fancy name. *Fortune's Child* is not bad as such names go, but the book might equally well have been entitled *Fool's Paradise* or *The Brigand Urge.* If anyone contests this, he might explain how Mr. Lapham's very funny account of how the musical comedy *Kelly* coasted to first-night catastrophe, or his atmospheric report of a Miami murder trial, or his sympathetic portrait of a courageous soldier, fit into the announced theme. Clearly they do not; equally clearly they are among the best essays in the book.

If the essays vary in quality, the reason should not surprise an editor of Mr. Lapham's experience. He conforms to the old saw that we write best when reporting something we have witnessed or when discussing a subject we know well. In particular, he is an excellent reporter—vivid, funny, with an ability to evoke atmosphere and a good ear for the quotation that establishes character. One such quote, from his sardonic account of the Beatles' pilgrimage to the Maharishi, precisely catches the common sense of the least "intellectual" Beatle:

> . . . . the flies had begun to settle on the food . . . but the Maharishi told them that to people lost in their meditations, the flies no longer mattered very much. 'But,' said Ringo, 'that doesn't zap the flies, does it?'

And on the press, recent American films, the moral legacy of the slave trade, the confusion between pornography and free speech and much else, he writes with knowledge, clarity and a kind of sharp reasonableness. Of journalists, for instance, he shrewdly remarks that they often seek refuge in "a fanciful prose style that conceals their own lack of information." Alas, that is the very problem with other essays in the collection. There are several in which cloudy inexactness and multiplying abstractions suggest an embattled Mr. Lapham, alone at his typewriter, seeming to hear time's winged chariot hurrying near in the shape of tomorrow's deadline. Perhaps he has spent four pages and much ingenuity on an idea that is turning out to be a dead end? No matter. It is too late to start again. He must press on through the mists to the uninspired climax. We thus get such sentences as: "The sense of time falls in upon itself, collapsing like an accordion into the evangelical present . . . nothing can exist, because anything so foolish as to make itself visible must submit to the passage of time." Nor is this quotation unfairly wrenched from its context. One essay consists of nothing but four pages of this kind of rambling. It purports to show that America is a nation of dreamers, but its actual effect is reminiscent of sitting in an examination hall, bereft of any relevant information but trying to spin out a one-sentence idea into the required five-page answer.

Then there is Mr. Lapham's logic. All too often his methods of controversy are argument by allusion and proof by sweeping gesture. Sometimes these result in a statement so clangingly perverse that a refutation is scarcely necessary. He blithely asserts, for instance, that although President Nixon had revealed an aggressive disorder of mind both in his Checkers speech and in his speech to the press upon losing the 1962 California gubernatorial election, "none of these confessions could be admitted as evidence of Nixon's instability." One exclaims "Eh, what?" and reads the passage again for clues to hidden subtlety. But no, it must be a careless equestrian gesture, born of the knowledge that no one holds the rich to account for their sins against reality.

Other logical follies are less blatant and their ramifications have to be traced. In the course of arguing that great nations, notably America, and respectable corporations use criminal methods as a matter of course, Mr. Lapham cites the following proof:

> In Vietnam the U.S. Army encourages a tactic of indiscriminate murder and finds, after a prolonged investigation, that the entire burden of guilt rests with Second Lieutenant William Calley.

But, surely, I interject in my wooden-minded and literal way, Lieutenant Calley was not found guilty of *every* war crime committed in Vietnam? He was convicted of a specific act—the murder of unarmed and unresisting villagers, including women and children, at My Lai. And if the perpetrators of such a crime had *not* been prosecuted, surely that would have been good cause to accuse the Army of "encouraging a tactic of indiscriminate murder"? Perhaps other such crimes were concealed with the connivance of the entire U.S. military establishment? But, to be convinced, I should require more solid evidence than the impressions of a man who believes that President Nixon's 1962 speech, in which he promised that the press would not have Dick Nixon "to kick around anymore," was never cited as evidence of his psychological instability.

We have, then, something of a mystery on our hands. Why are sharp and well-argued essays followed by vague rhetorical word-spinning? Haste and the deadline are surely insufficient explanations. Are we not given a clue by Mr. Lapham's invention of the equestrian class—a device that enables him to attack people of different and even opposite opinions as if they were somehow identical in all important respects? Vagueness and lofty abstraction perform a similar function. All are devices to protect Mr. Lapham from the vulgar necessity of taking sides in political dis-

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putes between conservatives and liberals.

This method is seen best in the already-mentioned essay on the Ford Foundation's 1974 energy study. All of the evidence marshaled and presented by Mr. Lapham supports the view of the capitalistic Mr. Tavoulareas that Mr. David Freeman, the project's organizer, was "a fool and a zealot." It also makes clear that the Foundation reneged on an explicit promise to Mr. Tavoulareas that he would, if dissatisfied with the final report, be allowed to publish a rebuttal, and it establishes that the capitalist was in general shabbily treated. But, despite this result of his own investigations, Mr. Lapham portrays both Mr. Freeman and Mr. Tavoulareas as equally misguided, equally at fault—unreasonable ideologues shouting passionate nonsense past one another.

Mr. Lapham's forced impartiality extends beyond the personalities and the issues involved. He tells us that the notion of the "energy crisis" was popular with the oil companies because it gave them an excuse for raising prices, and with the bureaucrats because it gave them an excuse for extending government regulations and thus their own power. Well and good. But is there an energy crisis or not? And if there is, which of the two solutions is to be preferred? Mr. Lapham implies that it is really beneath his dignity to inquire into so grubby a matter or to choose between two such awful sets of oiks. Clues are littered throughout indicating that he prefers the conservative solutions of the marketplace. But his style and method allow him to remain above the battle.

My own bias has perhaps misled me here, but the best-argued essays, whether on the energy crisis or on pornography, seem to point to conservative conclusions, if sometimes by a winding route. The side that Mr. Lapham refuses to take, on this calculation, is the conservative side.

Ungenerous people might speculate that he has refrained from a frontal assault on liberalism and its works because that is a perilous enterprise in New York City. Of course, the *New York Review of Books* cannot order offenders to the Gulag. But, as defectors from liberalism have discovered on breaking ranks, liberals in the worlds of culture and the media can command a formidable array of social and literary bitchiness—from character assassination to the withdrawal of dinner-party invitations. Surely, however, Mr. Lapham can be exonerated from that ignoble suspicion. He has arrived in that world with excellent letters of introduction, but he is neither of it nor subject to its sanctions. He would probably not notice that he was being snubbed or, if he did, it would never occur to him that he could be wounded by someone from the *Village Voice.*

His reluctance to take sides, it seems to me, has different roots. It is, in essence, a nervousness of becoming predictable. Mr. Lapham fears to join that large army of writers whose articles can be judged before they have been read—a perfectly reasonable anxiety. Only writers of talent manage to be consistent without falling into the trap of predictability. But, like the fear of being vulgar, it is a crippling fear for a writer. It leads him to suppress his views on occasion, to wrap them up in a judicious vagueness, to pretend to a false impartiality, to place too high a value on the literary virtue of surprise, and to take refuge in paradox, mystagoguery and mere style. And it is because *Fortune's Child* is marred by these faults that I can offer only the qualified recommendation of the slim volume that is embedded in its 359 pages. □

Hi! How Free Are You This Morning?

Raymond D. Gastil: *Freedom in the World: Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 1980;* Freedom House; New York.

by Lev Navrozov

If the distribution of this book depended on my praise, I would fill the entire review with "quotable quotes." But since the distribution of a serious book depends on a vast variety of factors, I will merely say that in our age of growing nationalisms, socialisms, national socialisms and socialist nationalisms, the Freedom House's annual survey of politico-civic freedom is priceless.

Nationalisms deny politico-civic freedom, for they insist that values be national, not social. Accordingly, politico-civic freedom may be national value for Anglo-Saxons, but certainly not for Russians, Vietnamese or Cubans. The concept suits both the rulers of Russia, Vietnam or Cuba and the American crypto-isolationists, who proclaim that the Soviet rulers' expansion will stop when it reaches the English-speaking territories.

There are so many different socialisms that it is impossible to speak of all of them. Yet even some of those which admit the need for politico-civic freedom tend to regard it as a kind of luxury that "poor countries" cannot afford, as though the absence of politico-civic freedom in a country were not the surest road to poverty as well, not to mention aggressive war and auto-genocide.

The annual *Freedom in the World* carries on the American tradition of universalism whereby the concept of a human being is fundamental. If 19th-century German music or Arabic algebra has been adopted by most nations on earth, it is not clear to me why the Greco-Roman-Anglo-Saxon heritage of man and his freedom cannot become a value for Russia, Vietnam or Cuba, especially since it has become a value for Japan, Costa Rica, Barbados. Incidentally, according to this annual, Barbados,

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Costa Rica and Japan have greater civil liberties than Greece (the cradle of democracy), France (the motherland of Montesquieu), Italy (the country of the Renaissance) and Germany (in many respects, the most Western of all Western countries). This alone wreaks havoc with the West-East or North-South antithesis. Similarly, we learn that it is the poor in Turkey or India who are devoted to the Western heritage of freedom, and that "Sri Lanka and Upper Volta, among the poorest of nations, have a free press and free political systems."

It must be noted, however, that the report lapses occasionally into the fashionable nationalistic mentality of today. Thus, the book refers to the rights of Palestine and Palestinians eroded by Israel. "Our feeble complaints to Israel led to a one step backward two steps forward movement by the Israelis."

In New York I once spoke to an anti-Israeli, pro-Arab audience. "I am a Russian who emigrated to the United States," I said. "My cultural allegiance is to Russian culture, and in the United States I contribute my Russian prose to émigré Russian-language magazines though they cannot pay their authors. Why have I then emigrated? I hope you are not so naive as to need my answer to this question. By the same token, if I were a Palestinian Arab, I would emigrate to Israel or support the rule of Israel in Palestine, for I would know that the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the 'sole representative of the Palestinian people,' offers no hope for any society except a tyranny. As a human being, I, a Palestinian Arab, would live in a foreign free or even partly free country rather than in my own Palestinian tyranny." When I finished, the audience applauded, which would seem to indicate that nationalism in America is only skin-deep, and that under the skin there is still a basic belief in human universalism.

Yet on the "Palestinian issue" the authors of the annual slide into today's nationalistic sentimentality, according to which it's fine for members of a nation

to be enslaved or killed by other members of the same nation, while the presence of foreigners, especially (God forbid!) white foreigners, automatically means colonialism, racism, fascism and genocide. Here is another of what I believe to be today's shibboleths: the "communist Vietnamese cadres," the book assures us, "however misguided, *were* more willing to sacrifice themselves for their cause than the noncommunists they faced." This is what the *New York Times* said, exhibiting its customary ignorance, supplemented with smugness, scraps of totalitarian propaganda and the desire to fantasize whatever suits the newspaper's goals and views. In a totalitarian country, whether communist or nazi, every soldier knows that to show any fear of the enemy is to run a graver danger than that which the nontotalitarian enemy can present. It is also useful to know that the North Vietnamese communist tankmen were chained to their tanks lest they should think of fleeing.

However, what is really worthy of serious discussion is the author's estimation of politico-civic freedom in all countries of the world. The entry on civil liberties in today's Russia contains the sentence: "Literacy is high, few starve, and private oppression is no more." What has literacy to do with civil liberties? How can the author know how many starve if foreigners see only designated cities and highways? There is no *private* oppression in today's Russia inasmuch as *private* activity is banned, but is this not the same as saying that in solitary confinement there are no unhappy human relationships?

The annual properly defines Russia, Cuba, Hungary, and East Germany as unfree countries. However, at the end of the entry we learn that the freest country of these four is Hungary; then comes Russia and Cuba (equally free or unfree); and the least free is East Germany. The "U.S.S.R. is as free as Cuba, freer than East Germany, less free than Hungary." The trouble is that in their ranking of unfree and partly free countries the authors seem to confuse the concept of physical freedom with that of politico-civic freedom. In terms of physical freedom, the Soviet regime is "as free as Cuba, freer than East Germany, less free than Hungary." Physical freedom includes the tyrant's permission to his subjects to do or not to do something. The Russian word for "tyranny" is "arbitrariness." A tyrant may ban or permit *anything*. For some reason the tyrants of Russia permit their subjects—today—to do more than do the tyrants of East Germany. Tomorrow it may be the other way around. For moral, ethnographic, tourist and other purposes all this is very useful and necessary to know. But what has this to do with freedom?

Poland is defined by the annual as "partly free": ranked together in political rights are Poland, Chile, mainland China, Cuba and Russia; and ranked together in civil liberties are Poland, China (Taiwan), South Korea, Singapore and Yugoslavia. Again, the tyrants of Poland, who are the satraps of the tyrants of Russia, are permitting many Poles to travel abroad, for example. This expands the physical freedom of these Poles tremendously. Tomorrow, perhaps, not a single Pole will be permitted to go abroad; either the tyrants of Poland may change their decrees, or they may obey the orders of Moscow, or they may be replaced by a military force before this review goes to press. So far, freedom in Poland is only physical freedom, i.e. some Poles are free only as long as their tyrants, for reasons of their own, wish them to be.

Why have the Soviet rulers been so lenient in Eastern Europe? Why haven't they annexed it officially as they did the Baltic countries, for example? The explanation is simple. In their world conquest they want the cooperation of the French and Italians who vote for the

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communists. Let the French and Italian communists, and those who vote for them, see how "free" the Hungarians or Poles are (unless they misbehave and have to be disciplined). As the Russian expression goes, a tyrant may want something just because his left foot wants it.

In Russia I lived with my family in a mansion in the countryside, my wife did not work and my son never went out to school until we left Russia when he was 16. Are many Americans, not to mention Hungarians or even Poles, as physically free as we were on our estate? Yet we were sure that we lived in a country without *any* politico-civic freedom, just as there is none in Hungary or Poland today: there is only the tyrants' current permission to their subjects to live as they wish. How capricious and arbitrary that permission can be is exemplified by the purges of 1937. It was certainly a life-and-death matter to an inhabitant of Russia whether he would die in the wave of persecution of 1937 or live a little longer because the wave was abruptly stopped in 1938. As an inhabitant of Russia who was released from prison in 1938 put it: "We are *now* living as in paradise." But did the enormous scale of persecution in 1937, as compared with the relative stability of 1938, prove that Stalin's regime in 1938 was freer than it was in 1937? The rules were the same; only the punishment had changed.

Even if a tyrant permits some subjects (dissidents) to criticize him or to go through some other motions emblematic of a democratic society, this has nothing to do with politico-civic freedom. After all, this is done with the tyrant's permission, such is his will, his left foot wants it, and, by definition, he may wish any wish he chooses, including the wish that his subjects play at political rights and civil liberties.

This leads us to the question: what is political and civic freedom? It is the effective presence in a country of institutions which guarantee the personal inviolability of a citizen to act against the will of the powers that be without harming thereby other people according to the opinion, formed after a due process of law, of an *ad hoc* legal council of randomly sampled, unprejudiced citizens. All that is known as trial by jury.

The development of such freedom in post-Roman history began with the first trial by jury in England at the beginning of the millennium, before the Magna Charta or Parliament. An independent court of justice is the beginning and cornerstone of the entire edifice. How can there be an election, for example, unless the safety of any voter who votes against a predominant group in power is guaranteed by an independent court of justice? The ultimate paradox is that if a person is not guaranteed protection by an independent court of justice, there can be no independent court of justice at all, for members of the court—members of the jury, judges, witnesses and experts —must also be guaranteed safety, whatever their conclusions, decisions, verdicts, testimony or expertise.

In 1913 a trial by jury in Russia returned the verdict of "not guilty" in the case of Beilis (a Jew accused of ritual murder) against the will of the powers that be, and no tsar or police or the Ministry of Justice could do anything about it. This means that, as of 1913, there was a rudimentary degree of politico-civic freedom in "tsarist Russia" (which some top American sovietologists still cite as the worst example of benighted tyranny). To use the yearbook's terminology, it can be said that Russia was partly free, in contrast to the free societies of today (the United States, Denmark or Barbados) and the unfree societies (post-1917 Russia or post-1949 Hungary).

In post-1917 Russia and many other countries which the annual ranks as free or partly free, a trial by jury (if such exists in a given country at all) would not be able to pass an independent verdict in a political, or politicalized, trial against the will of the reigning power, for each member of the jury would fear persecution for the rest of his life. Perhaps at some point the secret police would settle accounts with him by arranging a car accident or mistreating him in a hospital, for instance. In other words, in the post-1917 regime of Russia, the post-1949 regime of Hungary, and in many others there has never been *any* degree of freedom at all ever since their establishment, nor do we have any hope that there will be in the foreseeable future. As to the fact that more Russians were allowed to travel abroad in 1922 than in 1953, or that there are, lately, more Hungarians than East Germans allowed to travel abroad—such facts, while of crucial importance to the beneficiaries of the tyrants' leniency, are of no relevance to the freedom to which the annual is presumably devoted.

As a result, the annual's classification of countries by their degrees of freedom is insufficient and misleading, its research value notwithstanding. The mistake stems, in my opinion, largely from the predilection of many Western scholars to be influenced by the fashions of the day, including totalitarian propaganda, rather than to develop totally independent conceptual frameworks of their own. Many Western scholars assume that to be tolerant, objective, scholarly is to be eclectic, derivative and suggestible. Thus, the annual's entry on Russia begins: "The Soviet Union is ruled by parallel party and government systems: the party system is dominant." This is what Soviet propaganda pamphlets say. Actually, in countries like post-1917 Russia there is neither political party nor government in the sense that they exist in the United States. Such a country is ruled (and owned) by chieftains (neither their names, nor their "posts" may even be known) via a ruling caste, as in China in the 3rd century B.C. or in nazi Germany. Soviet propaganda uses "Western names" on purpose: an American must be reassured that the structure of the post-1917 regime in Russia does not differ in principle from the social structure of the United States. For a Western scholar to repeat these

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"Western names" (party, government, election, etc.) is to mislead the public about the nature of regimes which reverse a millennium of political development in Europe. These regimes should not be analogized to the European development just because totalitarian propaganda does so for reasons of its own.

One of the most misleading words (actively exploited by totalitarian propaganda) is, in this context, the word "democracy." Until the 1830's, or even the 1930's, the word was often used "in the Aristotelian sense," as the opposite of "aristocracy." Today, it has come to mean the entire hierarchy of the mode of freedom as it developed in England throughout the present millennium, beginning with trial by jury. In the 1930's the word began to be the opposite not of "aristocracy," but of totalitarianism as it appeared in countries like Hitler's Germany. The confusion caused by the new usage can well be imagined. Literally, the word means the "power of the demos," that is, the majority, in the modern perception. It would be difficult to invent a more absurd misnomer. Hitler was *elected* to his totalitarian position, and certainly the worst totalitarian tyranny can claim its authority from the demos, the majority. This was perhaps why the election in Rhodesia in 1979 which the annual describes was thought by some Britishers (including Prime Minister Thatcher) to be "not yet full democracy." The attempt to realize "full democracy" in Rhodesia by way of a new election was, of course, like trying to build a new and more elaborate roof according to the latest word of 20th-century construction engineering without learning whether the edifice has any foundation or walls—even at the level of the Dark Age.

I hope that *Freedom in the World* will at least stimulate some thinking on this subject. Judging by Mrs. Thatcher's and her advisors' actions in Rhodesia, it would seem that many consider it to be part of knowledge allegedly imbibed with mother's milk, thus sparing one the trouble of ever opening, in adult life, a history textbook. □

Pop Intellectuality

Jeremy Rifkin with Ted Howard: *Entropy: A New World View;* Viking Press; New York.

by John C. Caiazza

Jeremy Rifkin is at it again, this time announcing his anticapitalist and no-growth philosophy as a world view. This might seem a little much, but then again, why not? The last time Rifkin and Howard (with the help of the Peoples Business Commission) put out their line, it was as a form of religious prophecy in *Who Should Play God?* Announcing a world view, therefore, is simply one more grandiose way of saying the same thing, this time not as gospel, but as a big historical moment. However, inventing and describing world views is a difficult business requiring an intellectual effort and access to many different forms of information, since the point is to explain coherently all, or most, aspects of a culture as if they were expressions of a single idea. This is a hard intellectual trick to bring off, as the reduction of all aspects of a culture, from its economic arrangements to its schools of philosophy, requires what amounts to an artistic intuition about these things. Furthermore, the newly enunciated world view must appear as the inevitable consequence of the historical movements which have preceded it: Hegel, for instance, could perceive in the Prussian state the latest and best expression of mankind's search for freedom. But even if one does accomplish all this, there are always the existentialists among us to point out that there is often little logic or inevitability apparent in human affairs, that if there is, only God can understand it, and that you have therefore imposed an artificial rationality upon history. Thus, Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegel. It's obvious, then, that Rifkin has his work cut out for him.

To his credit, Rifkin is onto something, for there is a general sense that change is in the air, that a sea change is taking place in our value system and that a readjustment of our priorities is at hand. This change is taking place on many levels, three of which it is useful to distinguish here—the increasing need for energy conservation, recent developments in technology and industry, and theoretical changes in empirical science. What Rifkin has done is to lump these three together and to insist that they are all going in the same direction, not to a point of zero-growth or no-growth, but to a point where major industries and the technological substructure that supports them will be dismantled. On this we should be clear: Rifkin's is not a philosophy of no-growth, but one of retrogrowth, i.e. of diminution from city life and intensive energy use to an arcadian living style in which technological dependence would be reduced and energy consumption diminished. Rifkin insists that all this must take place as a consequence of a law of physics, the famous second law of thermodynamics which states that entropy, or the transformation of energy from a usable to an unusable state, is constantly increasing. Entropy is, in fact, the single idea mentioned above, which in Rifkin's world view explains every aspect of thought, culture and economy in the new age which is about to arrive. Among the aspects of our culture that Rifkin sees undergoing a fundamental entropic shift are energy consumption and modes of production and technological dependence as well as philosophy, religion and education. That's a lot of freight for one

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scientific concept to carry and, truth to tell, Rifkin cannot make it do so. What Rifkin offers in this book is a pop version of a world view: *Entropy* is to Vico, Toynbee, Hegel and even Teilhard what a McDonald's hamburger is to *haute cuisine.*

Rifkin attacks what he calls the "mechanical paradigm" and, to his credit, he is correct, at least to the extent that much of classical physics as it developed from the late 16th through the late 19th centuries has been fundamentally changed by developments in the 20th. In particular, Newtonian mechanics, based on a notion of absolute space and time, was overthrown by Einstein's famous theories of relativity. Further, the introduction of statistical methods of prediction has limited the degree to which scientific laws may be said to be certain and the results of physical processes inevitable. Thus our view of science has fundamentally altered, and the world view it supported has lost its certitude, hence its appeal. But if there was a mechanical world view and it is dying, what is replacing it? Whatever it is, according to such thinkers as Collingwood and Whitehead, it will be one which is not based on any of the iron laws of physics that exclude human value, but on a more contingent view of the universe in which a sense of the ongoingness of time, of time past and time future, gives us access to human possibilities and therefore to human values.

What has Rifkin to say in response to all this? The concept of entropy certainly has to do with the passage of time, since it deals with the transformation of energy from one state to another and, as Rifkin points out, once we have used the energy (burning coal or oil for instance), then in that form, at least, it is lost forever. What a theme for a philosopher or a commentator on the vanity of human wishes—especially as it is the entropy relation which gives a physical basis for the subjective sense we have of the passage of time. Further, irreversible time is, as Rifkin and others including Bergson and Capek have pointed out, denied in the mechanical system devised by Newton. However, while Rifkin presents the concept of Entropy (with a capital "E") as the basis for a new anti-mechanistic world view, he cannot let go of one feature of that world view, perhaps the most pernicious, namely the doctrine of necessity. Rifkin actually refers to entropy as an "iron law" and quotes Einstein to the effect that it is the best established of all the general laws of science (which is a bit like quoting Lenin in praise of the two-party system). So intent is Rifkin on reserving the doctrine of necessity for the entropy law that he attacks the attempts of certain 19th-century scientists to put the entropy law on a statistical basis, asserting that such greats as Boltzmann and Maxwell did so in an attempt to escape the force of the law, i.e. the fact that the universe is running down. In fact their real intent was to integrate the law of entropy with the statistical theory of heat, which puts the entropy law on a firmer theoretical basis and which is a generally accepted principle of contemporary physics. Again, the point in all this is simply that Rifkin wishes to establish entropy as an iron law whose consequences, Rifkin claims, are completely unavoidable. The irony is that Rifkin, even while declaiming against the mechanical world view, still wants to save that portion of it that he thinks will ensure acceptance of his version of entropy. Rifkin could have used the entropy concept to express the values inherent in the range of human possibilities and in the fact of choice. Instead, he chose to use it as the guarantor of his political opinions. In this, he is not different from Marx, Spencer, Comte, Skinner or E. O. Wilson.

Typically, authors of world views seek not only to define them in general outline, but also to show their influence in the practical affairs of life. Rifkin is no different, for he calls not just for greater conservation, or for a less hectic and artificial lifestyle, but also for a dismantling of our technological capacity, a gross reduction of our industrial productivity, and a shrinking of the earth's population. He argues for this on the basis of entropy, but he would seem to believe that energy consumption is evil in itself, as if all our energy resources were doomed to give out in the next six months. Rifkin's is a survival ethic—don't breathe too deeply or you'll use up the remaining oxygen that much more quickly. Thus he downplays the possibilities of synfuels and solar as new sources of energy, as well, of course, as those of atomic and fusion power. He not only predicts depletion of all our energy resources, he desires it. So great is his anxiety to promote the emergence of the entropic world view that he makes some mistakes along the way. He ignores the fact that market forces, i.e. the rise in oil and gas prices, have had more effect in promoting conservation than anything else, including government action and the promotion of bucolic lifestyles. Also, Rifkin exaggerates to an absurd degree the entropy process itself (his eloquence is such that you can *feel* the energy dying), broadly mixing the rates of decay of free energy in nature and those infinitesimally smaller rates involved in mankind's use of applied energy. In other words, by pointing to the inevitable death of the sun (in several million years), he encourages us to give up the use of automobiles. Finally, he attacks the increasing complexity of technology and its spread, avoiding the fact that only the full utilization of the new technologies will enable the peoples of the Third World to increase their stand-

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ard of living. (Calling for a reduction in the earth's population does not seem a practical way of dealing with this.)

Historical inevitability is an important part of world views; it makes predictions of the future seem inspired, part of the unfolding of a rational plan. And here lies the rub; inevitability may possibly be a guide for history as a whole, but it is a bad principle for the analysis of politics. Politics, by its nature, is so wrought up with individual events and their interaction that large-scale predictions become nearly impossible. Patterns of social justice, as Robert Nozick has pointed out with regard to patterns for the distribution of wealth, are by nature totalitarian, for historical developments will almost always contradict any humanly prescribed pattern of social justice. If such patterns as are prescribed by visions of the inevitability of the course of human history are to prevail, they must be imposed, as they are in Marxist countries. Where does Rifkin stand on this? Unfortunately, his drift is unmistakable: Rifkin's entire presentation points in the direction of totalitarian control. There is an understated, but no less real, element of utopian idealism in Rifkin's thought, for he genuinely has an alternative vision of what our lives should be like. Such patterns, when put into effect, however, become totalitarian states. The mass of men simply do not want to live in a style which demands that they moderate their appetites, restrain their ambitions, or avoid mistakes in their lives. Only a powerful, intrusive and oppressive government can make them live that way. This is how idealism becomes tyranny, and that is what is wrong with Rifkin's vision. Entropy, he says, is an iron law—but in the late 20th century, mankind has had enough of iron laws.

Rifkin's totalitarianism is distinctive because it combines the agenda of the radical left—total equality, government control of the economy, the destruction of capitalism—with a new impulsive force. Instead of the inevitability of class warfare, Rifkin's vision is powered by his concept of the inevitability of entropic decay. This is a vision of the ultimate winding down of the physical universe, a sense really of the ultimate victory of death and decay. This can be seen in Rifkin's demand that practically every aspect of our technologically based culture be destroyed and, further, in his insistence that none of the alternatives, from solar power to statistical thermodynamics, will avail us in our struggle to escape. This bleak vision denies that spontaneity is a part of nature, that there exists a human capacity for growth and adaptation, and that, yes, the hand of Providence is part of the history of human affairs. □

Our Age of the Derrière

Madge Garland and J. Anderson Black: *A History of Fashion;* William Morrow & Co.; New York.

by Mary Ellen Fox

Every style change in women's clothing is predicated on the shift in focus from one erogenous zone to another. This, at least, is the theory propounded by the late James Laver, renowned British authority on fashion as a sociocultural phenomenon. The current consensus is that the 1980's will be the age of the derrière.

Throughout civilization, different trendsetters have chosen varying areas to emphasize, expose or cover up, the end result being to draw attention to these areas and thus to excite and to titillate. The Minoans uncovered the bosom, while Medieval ladies frequently padded the front of their dresses to simulate pregnancy. The Empire styles of the early 19th century were cut very low in the bosom, with the skirts falling in neoclassical columns from very high waists. This also gave an illusion of pregnancy, and it has been said that Napoleon, who wanted his female subjects to be as fruitful as possible in order to populate his armies, encouraged this look as the epitome of femininity.

Male fashions have not been exempt from the temptation to emphasize particular parts of man's personality. The Renaissance male padded an area of his midsection which became known as a codpiece, while well-developed calves, left bare by a short tunic, were considered so important that the hose were frequently stuffed to achieve the desired curves. During the French Revolution, the trousers of fashionable men were never tight and revealing enough for their taste. Taking inspiration from Napoleon, men adopted skin-tight white breeches, which were frequently put on wet so that as they dried they clung even more tightly to the body.

Our century, characterized by the dazzling rapidity of change, has shifted the focus of the body's expository value every decade. The turn of the century and the 'teens first covered up and then uncovered the ankle; the 20's uncovered the leg up to (and sometimes including) the knee; the 30's exposed the female back as a matter of course; the 40's shifted to the bosom with the ubiquitous "sweater girl"; the 50's focused on the bosom and the waist with the postwar "new look"; the 60's discovered the unsuspected charms of the knee; and the 70's were enchanted by the braless, bobbing bosom. And now, as we enter the 80's, it seems as if the rear end has become fashion's most accentuated part. What is interesting—and, I think, new—is that this posterior curve, flaunted in the tightest possible jeans from street and billboard, is androgynous. It is the one area of the body that is basically asexual; women, men and even children are anatomically simi-

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lar in this region, which reinforces our epoch's tendency toward unisexuality and the increasing lack of differentiation between the sexes. A recently published work of profound insight, *A Woman Looks at Men's Buns,* has been selling very well in Chicago, while the burgeoning influence of the homosexual on our pop culture has also contributed to this rather obtrusive fascination. Mr. Laver would have found this trend in modern fashion decidedly significant.

The erogenous zone and the desire to sexually attract is only one vector influencing how human beings dress. The authors of *History of Fashion* stress the role of clothing as primarily to decorate and to idealize the body, thus ultimately registering man's dissatisfaction with his physical self. This idealization of the human form which is constantly changing its emphasis—after all, until fairly recently the ideal form was rounded and curvaceous, while today any vestige of curve is decidedly unchic—is a procrustean bed to which all physical reality must adapt. Sometimes fashion has indeed become a torture chamber, as with the bound feet of Chinese women or the artificially elongated necks of Burmese women. No less important is the role of clothing to designate the wearer's wealth and social position. To this end, various sumptuary laws have been enacted over the centuries prohibiting the lower classes from following too closely the fashions worn by their social superiors. Prohibitions existed regarding the amount of fabric which could be utilized in a garment, the height of a heel, the width of a hat brim or the amount of embroidered adornment. The authors insist that of secondary importance only is the role of clothing to protect the body and to cover it for the sake of modesty, since what is considered improper for one ethnic group or cultural epoch to expose is perfectly proper for another. There was a period in the 19th century when some shrill religionists believed that the Virgin Mary had conceived through her ear; thus women had to style their hair to cover their ears as carefully as they would cover any other sexual organ.

This survey of fashion has been beautifully presented, with many full-color plates taken from both art and fashion illustrations of each period. It is helpful in that it not only presents clothing but also emphasizes the importance of such accessories as jewelry, shoes, hats, underwear and hair styles as integral to shaping fashion as it was and is. Nevertheless, there are some criticisms: the editorializing is unnecessary. One garment is characterized as "nonsensical" while another is "flattering." Such commentary is uncalled for and, in addition, much too subjective for a book whose objective is primarily to survey. However, I find the most outstanding flaw to be the authors' viewing of modern fashion from a narrowly European point of view. Being English, they have difficulty avoiding this pitfall, but nonetheless it underlines once again their lack of objectivity. The book basically neglects all significant American contributions to fashion after World War II. If Paris gave us the "new look" and London the miniskirt, America has covered the world in blue jeans in the last three decades. Even more important is the American invention of modern dress known as "sportswear," a concept which exerts the greatest influence on fashion today. Sportswear developed alongside the informality of American life, which today is the lifestyle of the whole world. Component pieces such as skirts, jackets, blouses, pullovers and trousers which can be worn with a wardrobe of other pieces for a "mix-and-match" effect is the American contribution to modern fashion. It is a philosophy of dress adopted by secretaries, professional women and the wives of presidents and multimillionaire industrialists. Cutting across all social classes and economic brackets, the American invention of sportswear has revolutionized the modern sense of vogue. Anyone who confronts the reality of fashion today cannot stress this enough. □

Tales of a Columnist

David S. Broder: *Changing of the Guard;* Simon & Schuster; New York.

by Gary S. Vasilash

If, as Aristotle put it, man is a political animal, then David S. Broder's *Changing of the Guard* is like a guidebook to the San Diego Zoological Gardens: massive in scope and variety. Broder, a syndicated columnist, national political correspondent and an associate editor of the *Washington Post,* has the savvy to lead the safari. Looked at from another perspective, this book, which presents interviews with people from all over the United States—men and women, blacks and whites, conservatives and liberals, etc.—is something of a wish book, a collection of many characters, some of whom Broder hopes will lead the nation after the social and political aberration that manifested itself in the 1980 election has gone away.

The ground rules he set up for inclusion are fairly simple. The area of concentration comprises "The next ones who will take power—the babies born between 1930 and 1955," those who "were shaped in a very different time." They will take the power from those whom Broder calls "the World War II veterans, who have held sway for a generation." Although it is true that the generation Broder singles out grew up in a world that was different from the preceding one, this stressing of the dif-

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ference and, by implication, superiority of the 1930 to 1955 group is overrated. For example, members of the generation of 1905 to 1930 "were shaped" in a time that included World War I, Einstein's general theory of relativity, the Bolshevik revolution, Prohibition, *Ulysses,* Lindbergh's solo flight across the Atlantic, and the collapse of the U.S. stock exchange. So what's new?

Describing his group, Broder stresses that, "The shaping experiences for this next generation of American leaders were the civil-rights struggle and the war in Vietnam—or more precisely, the effort to end the war in Vietnam." The Watergate affair also has had a tremendous impact on the new guard; the words *Vietnam* and *Watergate* are yoked together throughout the book by numerous speakers (according to the index, Watergate is cited 29 times, Vietnam 39). What this ultimately means is that there are entire groups that feel guilty about what they construe as American military and political mortal sins, groups which will keep harping about one or both sins *ad nauseam,* I suspect in order to purge the body politic with their verbal emetics.

Characterizing those he interviewed, Broder says that they are "highly regarded by their peers" and also by those who pass his "personal test as being something other than pompous asses, young fogies or overly precocious pups." The third interviewee—following his father and sister—is Jerry Brown. Curious. Brown, who sounds more like Carl Sagan than any politician in this cosmos, is one of the most well-known and powerful men included in the book. Although the 1980 election results may prove difficult for Brown to assimilate, he has a certain vacuity—as characterized by his flip-flop on Proposition 13 in California—which should result in his resurfacing in 1984. If most of the others described in the book retain their bases of power (excluding the New Right and corporate-interest supporters), then Brown is a natural.

Broder separates the new guard into seven groups: the organizers; New Right; labor and business; public-interest lawyers and reformers; women; Hispanics; and blacks. Geographical areas are singled out as "frontiers"—places where political power can be found. They are: suburbia, the West, the South and television (I propose that this last frontier area be considered Neverneverland). The new pollsters, those who completely failed to predict the Reagan victory (and, I might add, who are not unlike their brethren in 1948 and 1936), and the "New Pros," those who are professional political types (appointees, journalists, Congressional staff members, etc.—and when haven't there been such?), are also interviewed. Given the premise that most of the people in the groups and geographical areas were molded by civil-rights and antiwar protests, then it is fairly obvious that they are, for the most part, quite liberal. So, after excluding business, the New Right and loyalists of enlightened conservatism, all one has to do is take the other headings, add the prefix *pro,* and voila! there's Brown's 1984 platform.

That this could happen—if not with Brown himself then with another of his ilk—can be read into the reaction to the 1980 Republican victory. Tom Hayden, who certainly has the credentials and connections to be a leader among the new guard, sets forth his battle plan for fighting back against "Ronald Reagan's conservative army" in the November 14, 1980, *Wall Street Journal.* It's a nine-point program. Highlights include: energy conservation rather than the "mad scramble for synthetic fuels and nuclear power plants"; economic decision-making performed by corporations, labor, government and so-called public interest groups, which will replace planning "from the top down, or simply in the narrow interests of the corporations"; a "Spartan national security," as opposed to one which makes the U.S. "a tiny fortress of gluttony preparing for nuclear war with the Russians while 500 million people are starving to death around the world"; and, the real concerns that are of the utmost importance: an end to the promotion of the "mass consumption of unhealthy foods" and the humanization of the office to "reduce stress." Little of this makes sense to me, but Hayden finishes his essay with the line: "The Democrats (or someone else) will return to national leadership when they are inspired again," so perhaps I require the laying on of hands or the infusion of an inner light to dispel my confusion. What is clear, however, is that the program is designed to give everybody something. All except for the greedy corporations, which will un-

In the Mail

Rent Control Myths & Realities **edited by Walter Block and Edgar Olsen; The Fraser Institute; Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.** International evidence of the effects of rent control in six countries, with essays by Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek among others.

Public Sector Union Violence; **Public Service Research Council; Vienna, Virginia.** A collection of clippings from 1974 through 1980 which deal with union violence.

Crime, Detective, Espionage, Mystery and Thriller Fiction & Film **compiled by David Skene Melvin and Ann Skene Melvin; Greenwood Press; Westport, Connecticut.** A comprehensive bibliography of critical writing through 1979, including over 1600 items from 25 countries, 16 national literatures and 18 languages, embracing a wide range of genres.

Los Angeles Times *Op-Ed's 1979-80;* Hoover Institution; Stanford, California. A collection of Op-Ed articles written by Hoover Institution Fellows including Milton Friedman, Edward Teller, Sidney Hook, Dixie Lee Ray and others from September 1, 1979 to August 31, 1980.

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doubtedly be in for a drubbing from the remaining Democrats (or someone else), the likes of which will make Ralph Nader's laying-waste look elementary.

Another type of reaction, this more shrill and less utopian, is typified in a by-lined piece on the editorial page of the *Detroit Free Press* on November 20, 1980. Reese Cleghorn, associate editor of the *Free Press,* opens the opinion piece that's headlined "The Radical Right Has an Agenda for Us" with the sentence: "The New Right needs a New Left, and if it isn't there it will be created." Basically, Cleghorn says that the "extreme right-wingers"—and he singles out John T. Dolan, chairman of the National Conservative Political Action Committee, and The Heritage Foundation—must be stopped. They have "From one trench after another . . . sounded their battle cries," so Cleghorn sounds a call to arms, warning that there may be a "return to witch-hunting by Congress. The witches to be hunted range from the New Left . . . to anti-nuclear protesters and certain opponents of more military spending." No punches are pulled by Cleghorn; the piece ends: "A revival of McCarthyism, long after it was unmasked and discredited, may seem farfetched. But obviously it still has influential admirers, and their teeth are bared." Indeed.

For the most part, *Changing of the Guard* is nothing more than a heavily annotated "who's who in American politics," 1980. Broder presents a balanced portrait of each individual, or at least he seems to. There is no obvious tilt to one side: pro- and anti-ERA women have their say; business and labor are both well represented, and so on. It is the kind of evenhandedness that one should expect from a reporter, which, essentially, is what Broder seems to be. But more than a mere reporter of the facts, he was the one who made the selections and he is responsible for the transitions between presentations, chapters and sections, and although his views and opinions are generally overshadowed by some of the more striking comments of some of the new guard, they are, nevertheless, there.

Broder characterizes himself "a thoroughgoing conservative when it comes to the structure of our democracy." When it comes to other things, he isn't. Case in point: his handling of the liberal Republican Ripon Society and the conservative Young Americans for Freedom. The Ripon Society is presented by Broder as an elite group that "first attracted notice by the quality of some of its policy papers." He goes on to say about Ripon and other "progressive Republicans":

> Where they have criticized their party, they have, more often than not, been right . . . . They were right in their criticism of the Vietnam war, and they were right when they said that mediocrity was not the criterion for selecting Supreme Court justices.

Broder notes that many of these astute people "flocked to the presidential banner" of John Anderson.

Then, 65 pages later, on the first page of the chapter entitled "The New Right," he describes the founding of the Young Americans for Freedom in 1960:

> They adopted a manifesto called the Sharon Statement saluting the Constitution and its division of powers, the market economy, and the importance of achieving 'victory over, rather than coexistence with . . . international Communism.' And they went forth to tilt at their own favorite windmills [ellipsis is Broder's].

Several pages later he lists the failures of YAF—e.g. the retention of the House Un-American Activities Committee and the Panama Canal—and notes that there are also "a few dozen more losing causes" to its credit. Ripon wrote policy papers; YAF wrote a manifesto. Ripon was right in its criticisms; YAF backed losers.

Such editorializing can be subtle; the mere size of the book allows Broder to couch his opinions. Of course, in his conclusion Broder openly editorializes, but this candor is really more of the same: throughout he is a columnist, not a reporter.

Broder asserts that the next generation of leaders was molded by the experience of the civil-rights and antiwar demonstrations of the 60's. He contends that because of their protests and activist organization and the like-mindedness they involved, "network links," or "spiritual and emotional bonds," were forged among the participants. These networks comprise the new guard, in Broder's view. That, essentially, is his conclusion. He notes, "At the end of the project, I find myself distinctly hopeful about the coming change." If he is correct in his conclusion, then people like Tom Hayden and Reese Cleghorn should also be hopeful. In Broder's opinion, members of the New Right generally didn't take part in such demonstrations, so, as a result, they didn't form networks. Broder suggests that "the lack of those spiritual and emotional bonds . . . to the shaping experiences of this generation may ultimately deny the New Right the long tenure in power that its intellectual energy would otherwise be likely to earn it."

It's commonly noted that even the most crusty reprobate begins to think about the Unknown as he nears his end, no matter how much of a depraved blasphemer he had been in his earlier days. As one—even the most pure—moves toward the end, things incorporeal begin to have a greater significance. What was once familiar, material, day-to-day life will be replaced by—? Hayden talks about the Democrats' need to be "inspired"; Cleghorn fears witch hunts and what sound like werewolves; Broder is depending on "spiritual" bonds. Could all of this indicate that the liberals and their supporters have glimpsed the End? Could *Changing of the Guard* be nothing more than a kind of whistling in the dark while walking through a cemetery: "Everything will be all right . . . won't it?" □

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NEXT
in *The Rockford Papers*

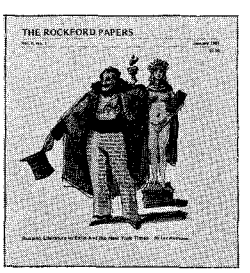
Moral Majoritarians have put together a persuasive brief. Only the deaf, dumb, blind and ignorant could deny that America has been inundated with pornographic provocation in the last two decades. On stage and screen and in books and magazines we have been treated to a display of moral degradation that almost exceeds the powers of the human imagination. Here I agree with the feminists: this material degrades women into objects of the most perverse male lusts. To argue that this affects only mature adults is to delude oneself into believing that children live in splendid isolation from the rest of society. If the amount and nature of pornography that exists at a given time serves as a fair index of a society's moral health, then this is, as Moral Majoritarians contend, a very sick land.

How can health be restored? Do nothing, answer the civil libertarians; act with alacrity for the day is short, respond the Moral Majoritarians. Clearly the civil libertarians' fastidious concern for the free expression of filth merchants will not do. But the program of the Moral Majority is fraught with danger. Freedom of expression is a fragile liberty; twirl a globe in your hands and count the countries where it exists. The People's Republic of China has no problem with pornography because its form of puritanical totalitarianism simply prohibits it. The dilemma comes down to this: how can

we stamp out pornography without setting dangerous precedents? Do Moral Majoritarians possess the sensitivity and powers of discrimination to draw the sometimes fine line between pornography and that which may offend their moral sensibilities but deserves to be protected? One needs a rapier in this situation, but Moral Majoritarians have drawn a broadsword. I remember well a budding young Moral Majoritarian who expressed to me his disgust with Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* because of a minor sex scene it contains. Recently a group of citizens of this mentality raised an uproar in Norfolk, Virginia, over a nude statue in front of the Chrysler Art Museum. Such sallies into the realm of aesthetic criticism do not encourage me.

I for one do not wish to allow the Moral Majority to define pornography and then to act authoritatively on that definition. Yet freedom does easily degenerate into license. Civil libertarians frequently forget that a society has the right and necessity to protect itself. Total freedom of expression can gut a society from within, leaving only a tottering shell waiting for the surging wave of barbarians to topple it. Moral Majoritarians have determined not to allow this to happen. I applaud their willingness to befriend and shelter the homeless waif of moral decency. But I wince at the idea of a Moral Majority free to work its will in this matter. Moral Majoritarians bring vigor, energy and moral rectitude to the fight against pornography, but they lack the intellectual acumen and discriminating artistic taste to guide them in this campaign. Only an older and wiser conservatism — one well schooled in the knowledge of the fragile balance between free expression and license — can save them from folly.

—James J. Thompson, Jr.
"The Moral Majority"
The Rockford Papers,
May 1981



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Of Love for Meliorism and Upheavals

James H. Billington: *Fire in the Minds of Men;* Basic Books; New York.

by Paul Gottfried

Billington's volume has elicited harsh reviews from journals that *Chronicles of Culture* has properly criticized as mechanistically liberal. I, too, must line up with those who have been unimpressed by this rambling study of almost 700 pages. Dealing with major revolutionary movements over the last two hundred and fifty years, the work covers familiar ground without breaking new turf. An educated reader should have no difficulty after the first chapter in guessing who are the personalities and events about to be treated. The unifying themes appear more often as afterthoughts than as real points of departure for understanding the historical past. The factual material may simply be too vast to be creatively or imaginatively organized. Whatever the case, the text is not improved by having Billington pile up truisms, a practice which he follows throughout. Thus we are informed, and periodically reminded, that Rosa Luxemburg and other Jewish Marxists had yielded to a secularized form of Biblical messianism. Supposedly Lenin and the builders of the modern Soviet empire were latter-day representatives of millenarian Russian nationalism, while Hitler constructed his vision of an Aryan world empire from the nationalist teachings embedded in Wagner's operas. Some platitudes of this sort may seem more plausible than others. But they have all been said before, historians continue to assert them as universal truths and often they are allowed to become substitutes for original investigation.

Perhaps, however, liberal publicists have been irritated less by the platitudes than by something else in Billington's work. I refer to his emphasis on the irrational and mythological elements in revolutionary movements. He never strays far from the view that revolution is "a fire on men's minds" and that, by and large, it has released far more destruction than good. Unlike such secular humanists as Peter Gay, he does not view the revolutionary tide that first swept Europe in the late 18th century as being either pagan or rational in inspiration. He links the phenomenon to the powerful impact of the Biblical promise of cosmic redemption. He sees in the succession of modern revolutionary doctrines various attempts to wed the Biblically-founded faith in a future golden age, to be introduced through violence, with the scientific models and social values prevalent at particular times. Like Eric Voegelin, he accuses revolutionaries, by indirection, of "immanentizing the eschaton," although, unlike Voegelin, he loses sight of the conceptual trees for the factual forests. Also, unlike Voegelin, Molnar and other critical analysts of revolution, Billington seems to be looking anxiously to his left flank. This may be the reason that he dwells on the moral virtues of Rosa Luxemburg and other revolutionary activists. The impression one gets is that the author dislikes Russians and Germans (a common neoconservative prejudice), feels less strongly about Latins and deeply admires Jews. These ethnic and biographical preferences reveal much about Billington but little about revolution.

There is one provocative observation in his book, however, that some of his serious reviewers (like John Lukacs) have not sufficiently appreciated. It concerns the profound difference between 18th-century secret societies—like the Illuminati and Freemasons—which aimed primarily at religious reform and the socialist movement which came out of late 19th-century Germany. Billington contrasts them architectonically: while the Masons and Illuminati organized themselves pyramidically (the Masons traced back their doctrines to ancient Egypt), the German socialists and, later, communists exalted the solidarity of their membership and their massive organizational structure. The earlier movements of change were still linked to an aristocratic culture. Unconventional opinions were secretly expressed, not proclaimed for the commonality. The *rite de passage* for Masonic applicants typically involved the mastery of esoteric learning; entry into and advancement in a lodge depended both upon one's social ties and on one's mental retentiveness. By contrast, the socialists and communists have identified themselves as mass movements and built programs based on the idea of social leveling. They also personify the further secularization of an older faith in man's redemption through history.

Only a relatively small minority of those in secret lodges worked for the overthrow of governments or for violent social transformation. The Freemasons and, even more, that most mysterious of 18th-century secret societies, the Rosicrucians, continued to view themselves as Christian. Throughout most of the century, they spoke of changing men's spirits in preparation for God's reshaping of history. If many Masons mistook the French Revolution for this expected turn, others, like the Catholic conservative, Joseph de Maistre, opposed the same upheaval as a distortion of the Masonic vision. Of course not all Masons were like Maistre, but as a group they opposed secularism and proclaimed themselves a purified Christian Church. Marxists and Marxist-Leninists would have no truck with either tenet. As the proponents of philosophical materialism (dialectic or otherwise), they have rejected even the reformed Christianity taught by the Masons. The only changes which they accept are quantitative; for

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they recognize no qualitative—i.e., moral and spiritual—standards, except in terms of the conduciveness—or non-conduciveness—of an action or idea to bring about a desired material transformation. The changes they envisage are seen as possible only through brute force and can be effected only through their impact upon the prevalent mode of production and upon the economically dominant class.

These Marxist commonplaces are relevant in that they show the true distance between Masonic pyramids and socialist functionalism. Billington correctly observes that the socialists sacrificed the depth and "interiority" of the secret society for the homogeneous solidarity of a mass movement. Even more to the point, they degraded Judeo-Christian faith in historical redemption to a fictitious material law. In place of hope for an ultimate divine reckoning in history, they left us with the certainty of the triumph of favored economic forces. Dispensing with the appeal to the individual soul, they prepared for their victory by mobilizing faceless masses. Thus the architectonic change that Billington perceives in the political development from Masonry to socialism betrays an even deeper alteration. It is the further disfigurement and vulgarization of religious legend: the defilement of one of the seminal myths of our civilization. □

Insanity Revisited

Rolf Hochhuth: *A German Love Story;* Little, Brown & Co.; Boston.

by Juliana Geran Pilon

Blatantly inaccurate as it may be to call a love story "German" whose male protagonist is Polish, the reason is clear: the subject of this unusual true-life novel is in fact the German reaction to the unhappy affair between a POW laborer, Stasiek Zasada, and the beautiful Frau Pauline Krop, whose husband was away fighting for the Führer. It is the response of Pauline's fellow villagers, set against the larger historical and psychological context of the Second World War, the emotional chemistry of the Prussian aggressor as such, that Hochhuth has taken upon himself to analyze. The result is a difficult, unsettling account of barbarism still terrifying, decades later, for its enormity. To underscore the cruelty of the sentence facing Pauline's Polish lover, who must be hanged for their brief moment of tenderness, the author succeeds in keeping the reader in suspense: though all along the dénouement is known, one cannot help wishing to undo the past. Is it really possible that an innocent young man will be murdered in cold blood for having made love to a woman who is just as desperately infatuated with him? A Shakespearean romance fit for legend and iambic pentameter ends up as just another episode in the peculiarly nazi-German cacophony of sadism.

One might argue that in contrast to the tragedy of the millions who perished in gas chambers, and that of the many tortured and raped children, this story is hardly the most shocking, hardly a paradigmatic specimen to dissect for a diagnostic autopsy of the German horror. After all, Zasada knew the risks of having an affair: he had been duly warned, he took a chance and succumbed to his instincts. How many infants perished merely for having been circumcised, for having been born in the wrong corner of the earth? How many women were gassed for lighting their candles on the wrong Sabbath? Yet, on reflection, this love affair is quite a useful analytic tool, for it clearly highlights the contradictory, outright idiotic mindset of the nazi leadership which was nevertheless capable of eliciting the obedience of perfectly ordinary and (alas . . .) law-abiding citizens.

Consider the irrationality at issue here: the law which declared that a foreign POW who committed adultery with a German woman should be punished by hanging was changed on July 5, 1941 (shortly after Pauline's love affair) not only to allow the male offender to go free, but also to make it possible for him to obtain a German passport! (And why not, indeed? Could a man whom a German woman had found attractive be really all that "inferior"?) For some reason—or, rather, in spite of all reason—those POW's who had been captured before July 5, 1941 continued to be subject to the original law. The absurdity was clear even to the executioners themselves—if not, perhaps, to their leaders. One of them addresses a colleague:

> It's even crazier than that, Karl. It isn't just that a Pole who's been working here for years gets hanged while another earns himself a passport for doing the same thing because he only arrived here yesterday. Don't you see? The new Pole can *only* earn a passport by doing what the old one has to swing for. That's worse than crazy—it's an unholy mess!

Their reaction? Less than heroic: "this seemed so abnormal that they treated themselves to an unauthorized mid-morning schnapps from the office bottle."

Hitler's motives for passing the original law and then for both repealing it and applying it in a mindless, contradictory fashion should be kept distinct, therefore, from the forces that moved the underlings who carried out his wishes. Yet both played an indispensable role:

> Blind and insensate homicidal mania, a fundamental impulse common to Hitler and a handful of his closest

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> henchmen, came to fulfillment in Germany only because the country possesses such a long tradition of contempt for intellectuals, for reason and the things of the mind.

It appears that the German people were eager to embrace a fundamentally antirational force that would allow them to follow orders and be exempt from thinking, to unleash their most brutal impulses. Hochhuth aptly quotes as a motto to one of his chapters the systematically misunderstood Nietzsche, whose oft-mentioned opposition to "reason" was in fact a repudiation of a suicidal, hypocritical and ultimately dangerous form of asceticism, no less dangerous than the excess of exuberance so prevalent in crowds inebriated by prejudice. "Insanity," said Nietzsche, "is a rare thing in an individual but habitual to groups, parties, nations, and ages." This is not to say that "insanity" is a univocal, simple concept: criminal acts are committed for a variety of reasons. Yet history demonstrates how easily individuality surrenders to the group, how reluctant men are to disobey superiors, even when the risks are comparatively negligible, but especially when obedience leads to some gain, no matter how slight. The whole, to paraphrase, well-nigh obliterates the part.

To be sure, some groups will, at times, be more vulnerable than others. Hochhuth notes that people under the Hitler regime appeared to be unduly prone to evil. Outraged without, however, indulging in sentimentality, he merely presents the evidence, justifying nothing. The fact that Hitler was "a sick man," for example, "is a statement, not an excuse." As for Goering—the infamous murderer had no real ideology, no hatred of the Jews, "he merely had an urge, first to impress Hitler with his all-round versatility, and secondly, to 'Aryanize' as many Jewish-owned works of art as possible into his personal possessions." (One is reminded of the contrast between the single-minded, ascetic Lenin and the contemporary communist elite with its Swiss bank accounts.) And what about the inhabitants of Frau Krop's village? Most of them did not seem to hate Poles especially; their motives, indeed, were not qualitatively different from Goering's. The neighbor who denounced the couple, for instance, coveted the unhappy woman's grocery shop. Ultimately, of course, neither greed nor envy are essentially German: Rusanov, the Party member in Solzhenitsyn's *Cancer Ward,* reports an acquaintance to the authorities and has him sent off to the Gulag in order to obtain the man's apartment. Echoing Solzhenitsyn, Hochhuth says that the propensity to sin and to hurt others is really in us all, varying degrees notwithstanding.

What makes it possible, then, for evil to overwhelm our better sense, the faculty that Solzhenitsyn refers to simply as our "conscience"? Without offering a direct answer, Hochhuth does hint at one. It appears that some systems make it easier for people not to resist the satanic tendencies within. Indeed, circumstances can so dictate events that even some of the kindest men become partners to murder. Zasada's hangman, for instance, his friend and fellow Pole, accepted his loathsome task out of fear that someone less fond of Zasada might torture him more. (Or was this only a rationalization, however unconscious?) And what of Zasada's fellow POW's who had been brought to witness the execution? They were accompanied by only two guards—hardly a sufficient deterrent to revolt. Are they not to blame, even a trifle? To the end, Zasada believed that they would

rise to save him. To be sure, the risks and dangers they faced were greater than those of the German woman turned informer—but we are now talking of degrees.

This does not mean that a "system" excuses or even explains the all-too-human propensity to cast aside generosity and to refuse to listen to one's conscience and altruistic impulses; such Marxist determinism is at best simple-minded, and undoubtedly dangerous, for it exempts individuals from legitimate blame. Quite the contrary, Hochhuth seeks to scrutinize the hearts of all involved, to warn against the conscious, even enthusiastic, surrender of individuality, so common despite its well-known catastrophic effects. Much as he dislikes Hegel, Hochhuth credits him with this insight:

> The masses revel in their love of obedience as if doing of their own free will what they are only and unwittingly doing for the sake of another, who will destroy them in the process.

And lest this sound a bit too elitist, Hochhuth is quick to add:

> Let no one suppose that the educated, or even those well versed in history, are any less prone to the orgasms of the political St. Vitus's dance. They differ from the mindless conformists only in their desire to furnish themselves with an intellectual pretext for conformism.

Reason is by no means the monopoly of the educated. Indeed, Lewis Feuer would emphasize that intellectuals (so-called) are peculiarly attracted to authoritarianism. And because of their influence, they are disproportionately dangerous relative to their actual number.

A system does not exempt a person from responsibility, but it may make it easier to forget that each must answer for his own actions. In truth, it was a firm conviction that all the participants to Stasiek Zasada's murder had a

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significant role—indeed, that the German people as a whole contributed to Hitler's attack upon civilization—that prompted Hochhuth to write his book. The verdict is not a simple and unequivocal "guilty"; but neither is the plea of national insanity meant to exonerate the Germans from stifling, in cold blood, so many million love stories. The book ends with an excruciating, vivid description of Zasada's hanging—his slow, ineptly performed execution. And as the writhing youth, fighting for air, lucidly meets his end, as he cries out for his mother whom he had not been allowed to inform of his fate, the German nightmare is captured as the author focuses on the executioners:

> Even they were so appalled at what they had done and the way they had done it that they unanimously claimed to have forgotten how it came to pass—some measure of their inability *ever* to forget it. Only the wife of the district director, who hadn't actually witnessed this 'rotten business,' could bring herself to speak of it at all. Recalling the incident after a lapse of thirty-six years, while the district director himself, now eighty, stared shamefaced at the floor, she declared that 'Father couldn't eat his dinner for a fortnight afterwards.'

A fortnight. □

Porgy & Bass

Alistair Cooke: *The Americans;* Alfred A. Knopf; New York.

by Tom Bethell

I have a fellow feeling for Alistair Cooke—like him I came to the United States from England (albeit a generation later) attracted by jazz among other indigenous fare—but still, despite having heard his broadcasts for years, I retain in my mind only the most blurred, indistinct impression of the gentleman. He seems to have achieved the odd status of cultural master of ceremonies on permanent loan from Great Britain, a performing museum piece, as it were, someone who sees through the daily political hurly burly, his gaze undistractedly fixed upon the finer things of life; an entrepreneur of culture and history, fine-liver, true observer, and, yes, a "superbly civilized voice," as we learn from the dust jacket wrapped around this collection of his radio talks broadcast by the BBC under the title *Letter From America.*

Civilized. Cooke to a T.

After explaining that he has "summered and autumned on the North Fork (of Long Island) for forty-two years," Cooke takes us on a characteristic tour:

> . . . there is nowhere I know—not the Mediterranean or the Crimea, most certainly not California—where between May and November there is such a succulent haul of so many kinds of splendid eating fish. We are just at the point where the northern cold-water fish nibble at our shores and where the warm water fish abound. First, for the gourmet, are the noble striped bass and the blue fish. Then the swordfish, and the flounder, and the lemon sole. But there are also other very tasty species which city people either don't know about or despise out of genteel ignorance. In the summer months the fat porgy is always mooching along the bed of the bay . . . Baked porgy is delicious, and I simply have no idea why it never appears on restaurant menus.

Because, silly, you can't expect genteel city folk to know about the truly civilized things of life. They are all haste and no speed—forever rushing about on the expressways worrying about ephemera like inflation and housing costs. Uncivilized.

At Christmas Cooke is in northern Vermont. Here it's two fat geese honking, old-fashioned kitchen platters tottering, pans bubbling and much ado about venison. Cooke must be descended from cooks. "I ought to say that I've had venison in farmhouses in Scotland and in lush restaurants in London and Paris," Cooke-the-tourer reminds us. "And with an immense to-do and gaudy promises of foods for the gods, in Texas." Plainly a man of the world (but one who is more at home with Scottish crofters than with Texas millionaires?).

Well, soon enough it is time to return to New York City, to the eight-room rent-controlled apartment on the 15th floor overlooking Frederick Law Olmstead's Central Park, which Cooke perceives as "a precious breathing space in a jungle of cement and steel." (Otherwise known as Mugger's Heaven: give me Third Avenue cement and steel any day.) Cooke looks out of his study window and manages to work up a little creative thought as he gazes at the stark trees of the winter, then later the "rioting forsythia and dogwood and cherry."

He notices the endless stream of earnest joggers and concludes, after some side reflections on the arms race, that "earnestness is the only soil in which ideology can grow." Thereby, Cooke lets us know that above all else he is not earnest. Nor is he particularly interested in ideas; certainly not in ideology. Earnestness is a bore. Ideology makes people behave dangerously.

All perfectly true, of course. Earnestness is boring, ideology is dangerous. But Cooke's response, to assume the guise of the peripatetic American aristocrat, devoted to little more than Porgy and Bass, is the intellectual equivalent of unilateral disarmament.

You can't blame a man for being a success. Cooke has plenty of talent and I don't begrudge him fame and fortune

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for a minute. He claims in an introductory note that these BBC talks are written "no more than a couple of hours before they are taped"—something that would be well beyond my powers. Still, what I keep thinking is that since the 1930's, when Cooke arrived in America, the country has undergone a staggering decline. Cooke won't ever tell us this, although he must be aware of it since he likes America and has never written about it condescendingly in the manner of so many visitors.

But he seems to believe that to draw attention to this decline would be bad manners. Perhaps in poor taste. The man is too polite to express the exasperation he must surely sometimes feel. (He does let this show once or twice, as when he describes pornography as "the clutter of filth that floats along with the First Amendment and is marketed for lucre in the name of liberty." This is a rare outburst for him, however; although he does also include in the collection a good piece on Richard Nixon, hinting here and there at a measure of dissent from his colleagues in the media.)

On the whole, though, old Alistair pretty much minds his own business, not butting in too much, whistling his own quirky melody as he saunters down Fifth Avenue on the way to the studio. Perhaps on these occasions he tries to reassure himself that it's all much as it was in the year they built the Empire State building. On the other hand, perhaps he knows there have been vast changes, mostly for the worse. One would like to know his opinion on the matter. If he were to speak out plainly, of course, the neighbors on North Fork would be bound to disapprove. Likewise, any display of earnestness would be acutely discomforting to Cooke himself. Nevertheless, it would be good to hear the old gent speak his mind at last. "Cooke's Jeremiad" would be perfect for public television. All the right people would be listening. Cooke decidedly has the intelligentsia's ear. That's why it would be nice if he would tell them off, just once. □

Teleology and Murder in a Candy Store

David Scott Milton: *Kabbalah;* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; New York.

by Louis Ehrenkrantz

It is no secret that "Jewish" novels have been successful, especially since 1945. Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud and Saul Bellow have received both popular and critical acclaim, and Isaac Bashevis Singer won the Nobel Prize.

One would assume, therefore, that a serious American novel with a Jewish theme would attract a great deal of attention from critics and engender a strong marketing effort by the publisher. The silence with which David Scott Milton's *Kabbalah* has been greeted by the literary establishment seems puzzling: neither the *New York Times* nor the *New York Review of Books* has bothered with it. A careful reading of Milton's remarkable novel may reveal the motivation behind the establishment's benign neglect.

Kabbalah is difficult to categorize. When Buddy Hall, a former high-school hero, kills the owner of a neighborhood candy store in Pittsburgh, both Buddy's childhood friend—now a rabbi—and a detective become obsessed with "tracking Buddy down." John Strahan, the detective, is compelled by his prior hatred of the murderer and driven by a vengeful motive dating back to an old relationship Buddy had with Strahan's wife. Rabbi Akiba Moldavan, wracked by poverty and preoccupied with Kabbalah, an arcane Jewish mysticism dedicated to revealing the unity of the universe—and hence the rationale for the existence of evil—wants to reach Buddy before Strahan does. His goals are to redeem Buddy (confront pure evil) and to save his own soul in the process.

All categories fail when it becomes clear that the ultimate revelation will be shared by all, and not by the uncovering of a withheld secret, but by a deepening understanding of the teleological universe the characters inhabit. The chase after Buddy transcends melodrama because the author is capable of convincing us of the genuineness of the issue: Akiba Moldavan, obscure clergyman, believes that in confronting his boyhood friend, he can come close to the center of the truth. Touched by "the chaotic power of evil . . . he knew nothing . . . . He told himself now, desperate in his impotence: If a man through Kabbalah could somehow unify the chaos, bring light out of dark, the world would be saved." A chase with such stakes is a contest worth noting in our world more than "touched by evil."

The success of such an ambitious venture depends upon the ability of the author to make us believe in the significance and the reality of his concerns within the framework he builds for us. This book's triumph seems to be the integrity of the enterprise: Milton obviously knows his seamy world of the dispossessed and desperate people. His knowledge of Jewish mysticism is not a cheap one derived from opportunistic gurus, but is informed with an understanding a good deal more than superficial. It is his genuineness that holds this book together for those of us who have never used heroin or experienced the anguish of attempting to save a seemingly worthless life. For some 300 pages, Milton keeps us identified with the fight against the ultimate ritualistic affirmation of emptiness and violence.

Mr. Ehrenkrantz is editor of The Cultural Watchdog *in New York.*

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Akiba Moldavan represents one of those rare literary occurrences: a saint who is believable. In the Dostoyevskian tradition, Moldavan discovers a link between the realm of speculation and the bizarre events of this imperfect world.

The comparison with Dostoyevsky is not gratuitous. In *Crime and Punishment* we are also aware of the murderer's identity. I don't think that it is appreciated enough that Raskolnikov's motive is not evident until the end of the novel: it is too easy to accept his own explanation for the murder until one realizes that his rationalization for his act changes four times during the course of his adventure. As in Raskolnikov's case, robbery is clearly not the motive for the crime, and Buddy, like his Russian counterpart, is embarked on a self-destructive journey, although their ultimate redemption is quite different.

Milton's world is a violent one to a purpose. He is not only aware of the existence of evil in the world, he knows what that existence means. This awareness does not shake the confidence of his vision. Saul Bellow once wrote, "Sometimes I suspect that I am myself under a frightful hypnotic influence—I do and do not know the evils of our times . . . I am familiar with the history of World War I and of the Russian Revolution. I know Auschwitz and the Gulag, Biafra and Bangladesh, Buenos Aires and Beirut, but when I come back to facts anew I find myself losing focus." Bellow's *Dangling Man* has become the metaphor for his fictional heroes, unable to focus, swinging between choices. Milton's characters, even when they are less than admirable, are committed. This is why I think that *Kabbalah* will be read by a devoted, literate audience long after other coffee-table novels have been discarded. Valuable books have a habit of hanging around that way. □

Commendables

Charm of Quiet Leadership

E. Digby Baltzell: ***Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia: Two Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Class Authority and Leadership;*** The Free Press; New York.

by James J. Thompson, Jr.

Buried within this pile of 600 pages of charts, tables, appendices and factual minutiae lies a slim and erudite book; unfortunately, it takes the skill and tenacity of a Welsh coal miner to uncover it. Whether the reward justifies the labor remains debatable, for Baltzell simply confirms what any careful student of mankind already knows: every society needs a traditional ruling class.

To prove that, Baltzell turns to an exhaustive—and exhausting—historical examination of the upper classes in two societies: Boston and Philadelphia. He delights in chronicling three centuries of upper-class leadership in Boston, for here stands a class that for generation after generation has produced men who gracefully have accepted the reigns of power and exercised authority with self-confidence, skill, and probity. Cabots, Lodges and Saltonstalls have proudly worn the mantle of leadership and class authority bequeathed to them by that crusty old Puritan patriarch, John Winthrop, who knew that a destructive and anarchic spirit lurks in the hearts of fanatic egalitarians. The old families of Philadelphia, by contrast, inherited the legacy of that benevolent Quaker opponent of authority and hierarchy, William Penn. Guided by the anti-authoritarian doctrine of the Inner Light, Philadelphia's upper class shunned the burdens of leadership and turned instead to the pursuit of wealth. So John Winthrop's descendants took seriously their duties as members of a ruling class, while William Penn's heirs retreated to their Main Line mansions to count their money and mutter imprecations against those terribly tacky common folk.

Baltzell's praise of a responsible and respected upper class rises at times to a level of high eloquence: "Class authority, like all other forms of authority, is a mysterious blend of sentiment and myth, of love and loyalty, and the graceful charm of quiet leadership. It is, above all, a product of faith bred of ancient traditions and a long continuing organic relationship between the leaders and the led." Edmund Burke would have liked that passage, and those conservatives who value the order, stability and continuity cherished by the Founding Fathers of the Republic will read these words with approbation. Acutely aware of the dangers of tyranny, the Founders established a government upon the principle of consent of the governed; equally sensitive to the lurking danger of mob rule, they hedged in that consent with checks and balances, and looked to a ruling class to govern with wisdom and restraint.

Baltzell's reaffirmation of the splendid vision of the Founders may well be a swan song, though: what chance does the *"duties* tradition of hierarchical communalism" hold against the *"rights* tradition of egalitarian individualism"? Baltzell furnishes no answer, but he offers a warning: "The atomization of society, fostered by the fanatic forces of egalitarian individualism, is the greatest threat to political freedom in our time." Such talk will win Baltzell no friends within the precincts of university departments of sociology, nor will his criticism of "Proper Philadelphia" gain him entrée into drawing rooms along the Main Line. □

Dr. Thompson teaches history at The College of William and Mary.

Of Love Between God and Man

James V. Schall: ***The Praise of 'Sons of Bitches';*** St. Paul Publications; Slough, England.

by Barbara Worden

James V. Schall is a paradoxical creature, a political scientist who believes that politics—the "art of the possible," the use of tactics and stratagems to gain an extra dollar to pay the medical bills of the elderly lady in a shabby welfare hotel on the back streets of Chicago—is insuffi-

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cient even to gain that extra dollar, much less to attain salvation. In short, he is a conservative. Thus, he writes:

> The calm and admittedly necessary liberal vision . . . still has failed to grasp the reasons for its own crisis in the contemporary world. This is the flaw of all classical liberal thought. It is theoretically indifferent to ends, the belief that such things are merely a reaching for the stars. The importance of method and means has left the notion of God and vision to others. Man . . . I think, does not live by means alone . . . We vastly misinterpret our times if we assume that the essential questions, political or religious, are not about ultimate meaning. They are about a *gloria* to be searched for and, hopefully, found.

Where this *gloria* is and how it is to be found constitute the purpose of this book. Both the selection and the organization of his topics are idiosyncratic. The argument circulates like a whirlpool, finally drawing the reader into a vortex by way of skillful repetition and re-vision, by a re-seeing rather than a strictly logical structure. At first it may seem difficult to ascertain any intrinsic connection between the book's purpose, quoted above, and its chapter headings: "On Building Cathedrals and Tearing Them Down," "On the Christian Love of Animals," "On Boredom," "On Sadness and Laughter," "On Officially Praying," "On Worship."

The vortex into which Schall draws all these seemingly disparate ideas is his conception of the proper relationship between God and man, a concept soundly grounded in G. K. Chesterton, C. S. Lewis and other apologists for Christian orthodoxy. The love between God and man is, according to Schall, the most important relationship in the universe. It tinges everything in human life with its peculiar radiance. Beside it all earthly ideologies are no more than insubstantial shadows. This peculiar glory inevitably arouses the enmity—political, philosophical and psychological—of the powers of evil. This right relationship between God and man can be fostered by many seemingly unimportant things: silence, play, laughter, loneliness and the regular reading of the *New Divine Office* of 1970 by religious and lay Catholics alike. All these are to be encouraged, for each contributes to the true work of God, who continually recreates the love existing between Him and His creatures. Politics, no matter how well-intentioned, obscure that relationship, for political history concerns itself exclusively with a second-rate history of man. "The true order of history is a salvation history. Aside from this, all political action is by itself. It has no order intrinsic to it nor any interior meaning." Likewise, this book has no meaning apart from the religious vision it presents. It must be read and reflected on at leisure, reread, perhaps even rethought, and each reading will have some new insight to offer. □

In Focus

Hollywood Squares

Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund: *The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community, 1930-1960;* Anchor Press/Doubleday; New York.

Reasonable folk would agree that a society has the right to determine its own destiny and protect itself from the encroachment of others, at least according to the sacred principles set down in our founding documents. But who is to determine which point of view dominates and dictates destiny and defines those dangers that threaten the existing order? Further, how is genuine dissent to be protected and opposing philosophies and programs mediated so that both our principle of minority rights, guarded by the First Amendment, and our need for the testing of competing constructs and solutions can insure the continued freedom and vitality of our society? The ongoing working through of these tensions reflects the real history of our republic.

The Inquisition in Hollywood focuses on the events surrounding the Hollywood Ten, whom the government dutifully jailed as a result of their refusal to testify appropriately before the House UnAmerican Activities Committee hearings of October 1947, but its larger concern, as its subtitle suggests, is with politics in the film community during the years 1930 to 1960. It is this wider perspective that gives the book a certain value as it helps us in 1981 to understand just why these ten men were judged such a threat to the body politic that they needed to be legally punished and professionally blacklisted. In an attempt to understand the context that led to the singling out of the Hollywood Ten, authors Ceplair and Englund have painted an even larger canvas to include the ups and downs of the developing politicization of Hollywood that predated 1947. Some basic historical realities appear to bear on any account of the ultimate fate and judgment of Adrian Scott, John Howard Lawson, Dalton Trumbo, Albert Maltz, Alvah Bessie, Samuel Ornitz, Ring Lardner, Jr., Lester Cole, Herbert Biberman and Edward Dmytryk.

The most important reality, of course, was the rise and fall of the credibility of the communist movement, for in the final analysis that was what the whole HUAC-McCarthy era was supposed to be about: would America sanction the acts and thoughts of citizens who took their orders from a foreign power, one which championed a social system totally inimical to America's? Regardless of the consequences to the lives of private citizens, was it not better to nip this spreading flirtation with communism in the bud and banish our domestic agitation once and for all? And indeed, with their treacherous record during the decade prior to 1947, the communists had left themselves vulnerable. As Ceplair and Englund note:

> However much the ideas and ideals of socialism and progressive action meant to individual Communists, the fact remained that the political organization to which they adhered took its instructions from the Executive Committee of the Communist International, which was entirely controlled by the Soviet government and subservient to Russian national interest.

Ironically, the HUAC efforts led to the final triumph and subsequent tyranny of liberal culture, rather than to the dominance of a persuasive and responsible social response which would preserve all the virtues of democracy and pluralism. McCarthyism died and new po-

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litical and artistic priorities asserted themselves, all with a supposedly liberal slant. This new liberalism, however, took the form of cultural hate and nihilism, in which we are told, for instance, that the real revolution is the sexual one. We wonder whether the old dissent was not better than this new orthodoxy, whose invisibility makes it even more insidious. (GMP) □

* * *

Perceptibles

Stanley R. Rader: ***Against the Gates of Hell;*** Everest House; New York.

Mr. Rader, for anyone who might have missed his interview with Mike Wallace on an April 1979 "60 Minutes" program, is Treasurer and General Counsel for the Worldwide Church of God, second in command only to Herbert Armstrong himself, founder and Pastor General of the Church. Now, Mike Wallace's interviewing tactics could probably make Saint Joan look like a thief and/or an idiot, so any conclusions drawn from that broadcast must be, at best, open to question. Mr. Rader, however, throws little additional light on the subject in his adulatory tome.

Against the Gates of Hell is a tediously detailed account of the attempt by the State of California—at the instigation of disgruntled church members, including Mr. Armstrong's son—to take over (thus, for all practical purposes, destroying) the financial and administrative control of the Worldwide Church of God. But beyond his own church's difficulties the real issue, as Mr. Rader sees it, is the problem of the autonomy of a church, any church, against the state or federal government. How much privacy does—or should—a church (and church-related schools) have while retaining government sanction by way of a tax-exempt status? It is a valid question, particularly in light of the recent IRS threat to revoke the tax-exempt status of private religious schools whose student population does not provide a specific racial mixture. There have also been equal-rights fanatics at the government level who claim that the membership of religious clubs on campuses should be open to anyone, regardless of his religion, or lack of it. Unfortunately, Mr. Rader's book does not answer that question. His cry of "Foul!" is loud and clear, and may be justified, but it offers no solutions. (BK) □

* * *

William H. Forbis: ***Fall of the Peacock Throne;*** Harper & Row; New York.

Fall of the Peacock Throne is a popular, impressionistic account of Iranian history, customs and culture, concentrating on the Shah's Iran and the country's development since 1941. Reasonably accurate and easy to read, it has interesting things to say about the texture of everyday life in Iran as well as about Iranian mores, values and attitudes. Occasionally the author expresses surprise at, or labels as peculiarly Iranian, things that are common in other Moslem countries, or to backward countries in general, but by and large he has a fairly sensible regard for context. Generally moderate in attitude, he is critical of the late Shah. Occasionally, Forbis criticizes the Iranians unfairly for not duplicating the *exact* patterns of social attitudes now *de rigueur* in the West. He is more interested in facts than opinions, a praiseworthy characteristic that makes this a useful book. (AJL) □

Waste of Money

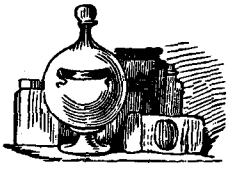
All Possible Candour

Erica Jong: ***Fanny: Being the True History of the Adventures of Fanny Hackabout-Jones;*** New American Library; New York.

An old bit of folklore in English departments in the late 1960's concerned a professor who offered a course in love and lust in the eighteenth-century novel and was dismayed to find that his students didn't know the difference.

The same foggy vision seems to afflict Erica Jong in her fiction. After the mindless sexual adventures of Isadora Wing in *Fear of Flying* and *How to Save Your Own Life,* she now anesthetizes readers with *Fanny,* which purports to be the "true story" of the leading figure of the book so familiar to adolescents of all ages, John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749), more popularly known as *Fanny Hill.*

Jong's new novel tediously relates the endless sexual permutations of a young eighteenth-century roundheels who sleeps her way through the "Who's Who" of Augustan England; goes to the mattress with anyone (whether madam, pimp, robber, slaver or piratess); makes her living as a whore, a thief and a pirate; and becomes the author of a mock epic, *The Pyratiad.* In the course of this journey, we are assured by Fanny (and thus by Jong) that



Alexander Pope was a sexual cripple, Jonathan Swift a voyeur who got his thrills from exhibitions of bestiality, and William Hogarth a satyr. We are also intellectually ennobled by learning four dozen eighteenth-century slang terms for prostitute and as many more for various genitalia.

In Chapter I (uncomfortably reminiscent of the preface to DeFoe's *Moll Flanders*), Fanny claims that "If these Pages tell of Debauchery and Vice, 'tis not in any wise because their Author wishes to condone Wickedness, but rather because Truth, Stark-Naked Truth, demands that she write with all possible Candour, so that the Inheritor of this Testament shall learn how to avoid Wickedness or indeed transform it into Goodness."

The statement is obviously intended to be ironic. But Jong's pretentious "Afterword"—in which she claims the blessing of a famous scholar (now conveniently dead) to give her book a veneer of historical respectability, and in which she boasts of her own research labors—offends anyone who knows anything about the eighteenth century. All of this is compounded by Jong's attempt to make Fanny a kind of picaresque feminist who lovingly dwells on primitive contraception, the joys of abortion, and the culpability of men for all of women's problems.

This book is neither history, nor satire, nor parody, nor pastiche, nor persiflage—all of which it pretends to be. It is simply a tasteless piece of fluff. (RCS) □

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O'Reilly's Ravings

Jane O'Reilly: ***The Girl I Left Behind: The Housewife's Moment of Truth and Other Feminist Ravings;*** MacMillan; New York.

by Sharon M. Mullis

In 1938 Dorothy Sayers, a woman who never entertained the notion that being a woman limited her options or made her a member of an oppressed class, wrote a brilliant and succinct book entitled *Are Women Human?* She answered with the same logic, clarity and common sense which characterize her prose style: of course women are human, and as such they desire what any human being desires—namely an interesting occupation which utilizes one's talents to the fullest, with reasonable freedom for pleasure and a sufficient emotional outlet. Unfortunately, in the years since then much of her common sense has been abandoned and subsequently replaced by women who see themselves not as individuals but as "sisters," "feminists," an "oppressed" minority. One of the latest exercises in this mindset is Jane O'Reilly's *The Girl I Left Behind.*

Ms. O'Reilly establishes that her consciousness has been "raised" as an individual. She thus worries about deferring to her friends' husbands, wondering what they want or what they think because she was not raised to be "equal" to men. This whole notion of equality, a constant refrain, is never logically explored or explained. What her view omits is a common-sense awareness of the variety of humanness. By entertaining the notion that to be equal women must aspire to jobs, like construction work, simply because they previously have been all-male domains, she is neglecting the obvious issue of whether or not a given woman is suited to the particular job in question. Instead, she throws around terms like "status," "rights," "privileges." In keeping with the feminist party line, her comments need no logic or documentation, just agitprop slogans. Men and women as individuals are not considered. "Nothing works" in this country because it is controlled by men who are committed to "upward failure." Marriage, as she describes it, is simply the "narrowing" of expectations on the woman's part in return for her being taken care of; it depends on the "oppression and exploitation" of women.

It is, finally, a childish evasion of responsibility which characterizes the book. Ms. O'Reilly did *not* leave the girl behind but continues to reflect some of the less attractive aspects of girlishness in her text. The same lack of goals and direction which characterized a younger Jane O'Reilly who went off to Radcliffe "bewildered" with "vague notions," who made her debut and married just because these were expected, characterize the older Jane O'Reilly who wanders incoherently from topic to topic. In like manner, just as a child wants others to accept his as the only way, so Ms. O'Reilly sees her view of life as the only acceptable one for all women. However, she doesn't seem to enjoy the work she is so eager to push down the throats of other women. She resents having to work, often "feels sorry" for herself, and at times longs for a rich man to sweep her off her feet and take care of her, for she admits that "a man is a better companion than a typewriter." We hope the penance imposed by Steinem, Friedan, *et alii* for her sacrilege is not too harsh. □

Dr. Mullis teaches at Clayton Junior College in Morrow, Georgia.

Journalist as Darling

Calvin Trillin: ***Floater;*** Ticknor & Fields; New Haven and New York.

One of the subtle but enduring legacies of Watergate is the redefined role of the journalist in society. No longer is the newspaperman, magazine writer or broadcast journalist a Clark Kent type. Thanks to Woodward and Bernstein—and their celluloid versions—the journalist is something of a Superman. He (or she) has attained mythic proportions; since Watergate journalists have been elevated to the status of knights defending the nation against the maleficent wizards in the White House. This self-serving propaganda by professional propagandists has resulted in giving journalists the standing of modern-day heroes, like movie or television stars. People nowadays want to find out things *about* journalists instead of finding out things *from* journalists—certainly an unhealthy situation.

The result of all this is that the news presenters are news makers. Magazine readers think nothing of seeing the face of a journalist on the cover of *People;* the journalists who show up on talk shows are often there for entertainment value, not because they can add anything of substance to the audience's knowledge of the world. When Dan Rather stiffed a cabbie in Chicago last fall, the newspapers in Detroit—and undoubtedly elsewhere—gave it day-by-day coverage. The media can be pictured (by those who don't adore it) as a snake attempting to swallow itself. In the bad old days, Hearst and Pulitzer manufactured news; today, their counterparts *are* news.

Calvin Trillin's contribution to the adulation of the modern American journalist is *Floater.* It is a novel in the genre which Watergate has multiplied: the *roman à clef.* It is basically a week in the life of a writer for a weekly news magazine. "Is it *Time* or *Newsweek?*" the reader asks, while correlating descriptions of the fictional magazine with the real thing. Helping cause this reaction is Trillin's "Claimer" in the front of the book, which says that one of the characters is based on John Gregory Dunne but that the others are fictional. Dunne? Thereby, Mr. Trillin marks his ideological credo: he assumes America knows who a Dunne is.

The title is apt: the novel is as weightless as the world it renders. (GSV) □

In the Mail

John Selman, Gunfighter by Leon Claire Metz; University of Oklahoma Press; Norman, Oklahoma. A biographical account of a shadowy figure of old Texas and New Mexico during the period following the Civil War.

Philosophical Style edited by Berel Lang; Nelson-Hall; Chicago. An anthology about the reading and writing of philosophy.

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Screen

Fun, Anyone?

***Nine to Five;* Written by Colin Higgins and Patricia Resnick; Directed by Colin Higgins; 20th Century-Fox.**

***Neil Simon's Seems Like Old Times;* Written by Neil Simon; Directed by Jay Sandrich; Rastar, Columbia Pictures.**

by Stephen Macaulay

In *Nine to Five,* Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin and Dolly Parton portray the Three Musketeerettes of the modern corporate world. According to the film, any faux pas makes one (a man, that is) liable to have the stuffing pounded out of him by the lovely ladies. Or is that righteous women? One can't be too careful. All three women are shown being dumped on by their boss. Tomlin, head of a section in the office, has all of the bright ideas for improving worker efficiency and such. But the male sexist pig (there were several more adjectives chanted by the women that I didn't catch, but those three words sum it up), when he isn't chasing his secretary, Dolly, around his office, promotes men above Tomlin. All the girls go into a tizzy, get slightly inebriated, then hold a pot party during which they fantasize doing in the boss.

Eventually, the girls kidnap their boss and hold him captive for several weeks. While he's out of the way, they make all the office reforms that the tyrant wouldn't stand for, changes ranging from a day-care center to the elimination of the time clock. Naturally, the male ultimately gets the credit, but the women had fun, just the same. The film shows more than anything else that a lack of morals is not limited by sex or position, that it's an equal-opportunity deficiency.

* * *

The legal profession and family life take it on the chin in *Neil Simon's Seems Like Old Times.* Goldie Hawn is a lawyer who defends blacks, Chicanos, Amerinds and any other "oppressed" people, then employs her clients after the judge demands that they find work. Her husband, Charles Grodin, is the D.A. and is slated to become the state attorney general. Goldie's ex-husband, Chevy Chase, is a writer who is framed in a bank robbery. He once spent two years in a Mexican jail on a drug-smuggling conviction, though he claims—with a grin—that it was all a mistake.

Goldie loves Grodin—or so she says. Chevy, silly, stumbling Chevy, returns and asks her for help and for a little bit more than help. He is a fugitive who can destroy Grodin's career, but, what the heck, he's more fun. Grodin is an old stiff by comparison. After all, a would-be attorney general isn't as wildly funny and cute as a writer who lives alone on a hill.

The movie is made in the name of and dedicated to the sacred stature of fun in our society. I've had more laughs while my dentist excavated my molars. □

Mr. Macaulay is a youthful movie fan in Detroit.

Art

Merciless Realists of the 20's

They flourished in Germany in a climate which colored their social and ideological concerns with a ruthlessness rarely matched in the history of art. They are known only vaguely in this country outside the circles of critics, experts and big-city connoisseurs. Such obscurity is a pity, for theirs are perfect visual comments about what happened between the unbound cultural nihilism of the Weimar era and Hitler's "national renaissance." They illustrate how social conscience, when expressed through jarring ugliness in order to shake individual consciences, can breed hopelessness and cynicism, turning moral permissiveness into weakness and rot that enable political thugs to thrive.

It's therefore commendable that the Minneapolis Institute of Arts organized the exhibit "German Realism of the Twenties," which was then hosted by the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art from November 1980 through January 1981.

The period and the style, termed by historians *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Realism), is, of course, suffused with a curious mixture of Marxist dialectics, romanticism and hedonistic sensitivities—a concoction which has characterized every bohemian rebellion of the 20th century. The symbols of social defiance, sentimental enthusiasm and sexual license intermingle supposedly to demonstrate ethics, compassion, recognition of cruel injustice. The great names of the movement—Otto Dix, Christian Schad, Ernest Thoms—merci-

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lessly hammer at the same conceptual theme. The word and notion *bourgeoisie* is distilled on their canvases as the pure gnostic extract of evil. Rudolf Schlichter's portrait of Bertolt Brecht becomes a sort of holy icon. Christian Schad's renditions of individualized depravity are perhaps more humane, moderated by some melancholic, worldly introspections, but at the same time ambivalent. We had no trouble with George Grosz's naturalistic satire; he's perhaps the best known of the group because of his political drawings, in which he unabashedly executed Communist Party line. We now know the outcome of his efforts, the political consequences he served. We know how his artistic passion helped the masters of Gulags. In fact, the same goes for most of his confreres: their talents, their art, their high-powered skepticism, all of which seem to be motivated by a penetrating, infallible, sharp intelligence, in the end served a shallow lie, a propagandistic exploitation. It's ironic that, in the long run, the political reality for which they fought produced a cultural prison for their grandsons in East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia. In the short run—it had a hand in the rise of nazism and the creation of Auschwitz. □

Music

Records

by Doug Ramsey

The trumpeter Miles Davis recorded exclusively for the Prestige label for nearly five years, from January 1951 to October 1956. During that period he became a figure of prodigious influence in the development of jazz. His Prestige recordings, often reissued and steadily popular, have served as living textbooks for musicians. Now comes the ultimate Davis reissue on Prestige, a 12-record set ("Chronicle," Prestige P-012) that presents everything he recorded for the label. For $120 the buyer gets an indexed, bound volume of the records in chronological order, a biographical essay by Dan Morgenstern, a Davis Prestige discography tracing the history of each title by master number, complete personnel information for each session, and photographs of Davis and some of his most important colleagues.

Hearing Davis through the early 50's is to trace the course of the jazz mainstream. He seems to be in a constant search for a perfect band, which he formed, perhaps, in 1955. There are no less than 32 tracks by the Davis quintet which included tenor saxophonist John Coltrane, pianist Red Garland, drummer Philly Joe Jones and bassist Paul Chambers. This, I believe, was the most important small band of the 1950's, and one of the most important in the history of jazz, ranking with the Louis Armstrong Hot Five, Jones-Smith, Incorporated (Count Basie and Lester Young), and Duke Ellington's small groups. The quintet paved the way for a slightly later Davis group in which he, Coltrane and pianist Bill Evans developed the scalar and modal playing that opened new vistas in the 1960's and 70's.

"4 x 4: McCoy Tyner Quartets" (Milestone M-55007) presents the pianist, bassist Cecil McBee and drummer Al Foster with four soloists recorded in separate sessions. It includes some of Tyner's most focused playing. Much of his work of the past decade has been diffused by the monotony of his harmonic approach as he explored the possibilities of simplified chord structures and the abstractions of free jazz. With this album it seems he should have called off the exploration and returned earlier to the song form. I haven't heard this much lyricism and cogency from Tyner since the middle and late 1960's. He is particularly effective in the pieces with saxophonist Arthur Blythe, vibraharpist Bobby Hutcherson and trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, whose solo on Tyner's "Inner Glimpse" is masterful. With guitarist John Abercrombie, Tyner returns to boredom as the two reinforce one another's tendencies to meander and ruminate.

Sam Most inspired and set the example for most of the day's leading jazz flute players, including James Moody, Herbie Mann, Yusef Lateef and Hubert Laws. There is a strong case to be made for Most's still being the best of the breed, and "From the Attic of My Mind" (Xanadu 160) is the latest evidence. His reappearance on the jazz scene after several years in the artistic desert of the Hollywood studios and sound stages is an auspicious event.

Twenty-five years ago I was captivated by a drum solo, something that has rarely happened before or since. It came during a piece called "A Fifth for Frank" on a Curtis Counce album, "Landslide" (Contemporary S 7526), and the drummer was young Frank Butler. It was, so help me, a lyrical drum solo, a melodic drum solo, a witty drum solo, and it was performed with a skill and panache that identified its author as a genuine stylist. Later I learned that Butler's solo on "A Fifth for Frank" was an underground favorite of jazz musicians, particularly drummers, all over the world. "Landslide" is still available, by the way, and I recommend it not only for Butler's solo but also because the Counce band was a marvel.

Butler has remained a favorite performer of musicians and hard-core jazz fans but has been all but unknown to the public. He was caught for years in a consuming narcotics addiction. After he had conquered his sickness, he became a professional narcotics counselor, helping others to get well. It was not

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until 1974 that Butler was coaxed back into the recording studios. Since then, he has appeared on several Xanadu albums. The latest is "Wheelin' and Dealin' " (Xanadu 169), and in it Butler leads a quintet featuring the tenor saxophonists Teddy Edwards and Joe Farrell. Farrell is adventuresome and edgy. Edwards often falls back on bop clichés but is as comfortable as an old corduroy jacket. Butler's solos are short, infrequent and brilliant. His timekeeping and accompaniments are perfect.

Scott Hamilton is a phenomenon, a tenor saxophonist born in 1954 whose heart is in the late 30's. Hamilton's heroes are Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Chu Berry, Herschel Evans, Lester Young, the tenor giants of the swing era. While most of his contemporaries model themselves on John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins and become less and less distinguishable from one another, Hamilton has used the lessons of older generations to forge a style that is more distinctive year by year. The latest of his several albums on the Concord label is "Tenorshoes" (Concord CJ-127). With beautiful assistance from pianist Dave McKenna, Hamilton applies his spacious conception to a group of standard songs, one blues, and the bebop anthem "Our Delight," which he de-bebops delightfully.

Rollicking was one of the things the baritone saxophonist Leo Parker did best, and he does it throughout "Rollin' with Leo" (Blue Note LT-1076), recorded in 1961 just a few months before Parker died at 37, but not released until now. Parker was one of the first of the bop baritone players. Never a profound soloist, he had a huge sound with a cutting edge that was perfect for the bottom of the legendary Billy Eckstine saxophone section. Most of the records under his own name were blues. He loved to play the blues, which are here in several keys and speeds. However, it is not a blues but Coleman Hawkins's "Stuffy" that takes album honors, Parker justifying the "rollin' " of the LP's title.

Not that the music of Fats Waller and James P. Johnson needs the Smithsonian Institution to survive, but the Smithsonian Jazz Repertory Ensemble has done the composers proud in "Music of Fats Waller and James P. Johnson" (The Smithsonian Collection N-021). With clarinetist-saxophonist Bob Wilber in command, the players recreate some of the piano giants' best recordings, but contribute their own solos. The power and fun that Waller and Johnson put into their music is clearly transmitted through these latter-day admirers. Pianist Dick Wellstood's handling of "Jitterbug Waltz" and "Handful of Keys" re-emphasizes his primacy among Waller interpreters.

Ahmad Jamal's "Intervals" (20th Century-Fox T-622) is mostly pop pap. But "So in Love" and "Bones" feature Jamal's piano without fusion trappings, and it is evident that his magic use of touch, melodic invention and space have not withered, despite efforts to make of him another Ramsey Lewis. □

Polemics & Exchanges

More on Central America

by Jeffrey St. John

Edward J. Walsh's "Letter from Central America" (Nov./Dec. 1980) has so many fissures running through it that I feel compelled at least to offer the benefit of my own first-hand experiences in the region.

Mr. Walsh's errors, both of omission and commission, are the ones made by nearly all Americans educated in the idea that the intellectual and cultural roots of North America run East to West, thus ignoring the cultural currents South to North. For example, he repeats the inaccurate incantation of the Spanish conquest as motivated by greed for gold, which ended with genocide. As with most history, it was a great deal more complex than that. Furthermore, many of the Mayan and Quiche Indians joined forces with the Spanish, much as the North American Indian tribes chose up sides between the French and the English as a way of settling old tribal scores. Mr. Walsh should read a very informative and important primer on the nations south of the Rio Grande, *Tree of Hate* (Basic Books, 1971), by Dr. Philip Wayne Powell of the University of California at Santa Barbara.

I have spent time up in the Quiche Indian country of Guatemala, and I think it would have been helpful for the reader if Mr. Walsh had pointed out, if he knew, that most of the Indians own their own land. The social structure of family, the marketplace and religion—the latter a blending of ancient Mayan ritual and Catholicism—is the funda-

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ERRATUM

In the January 1980 issue of *Chronicles* an error was made in Thomas Molnar's identification ("Correspondence," Letter from Paris: The French "New Right"). Professor Molnar teaches at Brooklyn College, not New York University.

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mental reason for Marxism's failure to penetrate the Quiche. It is not, as Mr. Walsh asserts, the product of demographics and geography. The anti-Marxist government has failed to "modernize" the Quiche for the same reasons.

Mr. Walsh repeats the falsehood that Somoza of Nicaragua siphoned off U.S. aid after the earthquake that hit Managua in 1972. Long before Somoza had offered a defense by citing five separate U.S. investigations that cleared him of such allegations (in his recent book, *Nicaragua Betrayed,* with Jack Cox, Western Islands, 1980), I had already read two of the Agency for International Development reports clearing Somoza of this repeated canard.

Also, I interviewed Somoza on five different occasions between 1977 and 1979. I spent some time questioning him about his decision not to rebuild the devastated area of Managua. He told me in October 1977 that he had to choose between inflating the currency with a crash reconstruction program that might be leveled by another quake, or building from scratch at a slower pace in a safer part of Managua. He chose not to inflate the economy and did not yield to the political pressures of his own political party, which wanted the government to cover the losses of party members who lacked the foresight to take out insurance. It was as a result of this decision that many businessmen in Nicaragua decided to join the anti-Somoza campaign, allying themselves with the Marxist Sandinistas. Furthermore, it is an outright distortion to say, as Mr. Walsh does, that thousands were killed in an "anti-Somoza revolution." Like the history of the Spanish conquest, and of Central America generally, it was a lot more complex.

The revolution in Nicaragua was essentially the creation of two primary groups during the preparatory and ignition stage: the Marxists aided by the Christian Democrats in Latin America in alliance with Castro and the Soviets; and carried out on the ground by the radical liberation theologists of the Catholic

Hispanic Church. The business element came late to the "revolution" and did so for two reasons. One, the family feud between the Somoza and Chamorro families. (Pedro Chamorro, owner of the Managua daily, *La Prensa,* wanted to be president and thus allied himself with the Marxists and the radical Church to achieve such a goal, but he was assassinated before he could realize his 25-year-old dream.) Only by understanding the hundred years of family feuds in Nicaragua is one able to understand its real history. Secondly, the anti-Somoza businessmen were never sure they could come out on top in a revolution directed by Castro and Cuba, but when the Carter administration made it clear it was trying to get rid of Somoza, they changed camps.

The glowing picture Mr. Walsh paints of Costa Rica is consistent with the conventional wisdom that is in error. The fact is, the initial cancer cells were incubated in Costa Rica, and it was this country that became the sanctuary (with the guidance of a top-heavy Soviet Embassy staff in San Jose since 1972) that led to the revolution in Nicaragua, the bloodletting in El Salvador and terrorism in Guatemala.

What concerns me about Mr. Walsh's piece is that it repeats the understandable errors of others not of his or my philosophical persuasion. And while we are being distracted by the events in Poland, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf, Marxism—under the cloak of the Catholic Church—is making enormous strides in the soft underbelly of America: Central America. If we do not get the facts straight about so vital an area, then the future may be as gloomy as Mr. Walsh makes it out to be, but for reasons that I fear he has not fully understood. □

Mr. Walsh's Last Words

by Edward J. Walsh

I note Mr. St. John's points of contention with my piece, and while duly conceding a couple of them, I wonder if he understood my motive in writing it, which was to provide a perspective on recent events in Central America, and more importantly, on what may well happen if pro-Marxist forces score further victories. I had no intention of explicating the history of the region in any great detail. However, on his specific points: first, I don't believe I suggested genocide by the Spanish; I did suggest warfare. If I was unclear, I amend the point herewith. I did not write, as Mr. St. John alleges, that demographics and geography are reasons for Marxism's failure to penetrate the Quiche. My sentence read: "To a very great extent, Guatemala's current bloody battle with Marxist terrorists is affected by demography and geography." That admittedly broad statement was intended to cover several things, such as 1) the difficulties in "modernizing" the nation, because the Indians (with their tradi-

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tions, etc.) constitute such a large portion of the population and 2) the difficulties in combating the Marxist guerrillas due to the hiding places afforded by jungles, rugged mountains, secluded villages, etc. Nowhere did I suggest anything which would contradict Mr. St. John's explanation of the importance of religion to the Indians. It was not my intention to say everything there is to say about what is going on in Guatemala.

As to my reference to Somoza expropriating relief funds after the 1972 earthquake: it was alluded to by Hector Wilkinson of LAAD of CentroAmerica, a regional land-development firm. Wilkinson is a twenty-year resident of Nicaragua and a staunch anticommunist. I was startled when he mentioned it at our meeting in Managua last summer and considered it significant. I had not researched the allegation; therefore, perhaps I shouldn't have mentioned it. Mr. St. John should note, however, that I did not accuse Somoza of not rebuilding downtown Managua because of any ulterior motive; I wrote that the area was lined with flaws that would have made rebuilding unwise.

At the same time, I emphatically disagree with the suggestion that noncommunist businessmen who opposed Somoza did so only in the hope of personal profit. Somoza, I believe, was more sinned against than sinning. But he was an autocrat and therefore made enemies among honorable men as well as leftists. I certainly would not call the "anti-Somoza revolution" a pro-Marxist revolution without qualification, since many non-Marxists joined the Sandinistas. I think I provided sufficient detail on exactly who came out on top, and why. I didn't consider my description of Costa Rica a glowing one. My main impression was that Costa Rican businessmen are (were) smugly indifferent to potential political and economic crises.

If, as Mr. St. John recommends, we get our facts straight on Central America, his reference to "Marxism—under the cloak of the Catholic Church—" ought to be sharply qualified to read: "under the cloaks of individual priests and nuns whose radical activities have been disavowed by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church . . ." The Jesuit and Maryknoll orders in Central America have largely been radicalized; still, they do not constitute "the Church." □

The American Proscenium

Hope

Not until Mr. Reagan and his people convince us that they are aware of the fine distinction between economic wealth, economic success and economic vigor of the nation will we look toward his administration with hope. Those three categories are not the same or synonymous; in fact, they are morally differentiated. To our mind, not every successful tycoon who was able to drive up to an inaugural ball in an elongated limousine is of social value; not every multibillion-dollar corporation is an ally in the effort toward national renewal. Every multidimensional conservative knows *that.* One of Mr. Carter's most disturbing habits was that —as President—he still tended to cultivate and defend friendships without regard to his friends' ethical substance. We trust Mr. Reagan won't follow this pattern.

Memo

To: President Ronald Reagan, The White House.

From: A group of supporters at The Rockford Institute—which is dedicated to musing upon our American reality.

Concerning: What Winnie-the-Pooh called Rabbit's friends-and-relations syndrome.

Dear President Reagan:

This is neither a frivolous nor a lighthearted matter. We are uneasy about the atmosphere which is condensing around your Presidency. As disciples of Winnie-the-Pooh (that quintessential philosopher of simple sagacities) who watch the tube and read the newspapers, we begin to feel a bit of melancholic frustration. The outpouring of ecstatic "Oh's!" and "Ah's!" that is greeting your ascension to power from the living quarters and stomping grounds of the chic canaille makes us very uncomfortable. Your inaugural balls teemed with characters from the liberal Grand Guignol whose faces and countenances made us shudder. When asked by Winnie-the-Pooh about *his* following:

> 'I didn't ask them,' explained Rabbit carelessly. 'They just came. They always do . . .'

It is that adverb "carelessly" that bothers us most. Do you, President Reagan, still care who is—or is not—your true friend-and-relation? We know that it is a Christian virtue to turn enemies into friends, but is this as artless as it sounds? Some enemies-turned-friends may signify less a reconciliation than a hazard. Already, after reviewing your appointments and your social calendar, someone said aptly that it seemed as if not Main Street but Wall Street had won the 1980 election. We have nothing against Wall Street, but it certainly is not the neighborhood from which most of your votes came, nor where those sensitivities flourish which gave you your victory. What's even worse is the kissy-kissy acclaim given to you by that segment of our society (we call it the *Weltanschauung* rabble) which now goes into rapture over you in the pages

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of *People* magazine and *Women's Wear Daily,* in the radic-lib salons of Beekman Place, Georgetown and Westchester County. Even Mr. Andy Warhol had this to say about your inaugural address:

> I loved it! It was just the way I feel!

Andy Warhol?

Yes, the same Mr. Andy Warhol, the liberal culture's court pornographer and Campbell can artist, the pride of the Manhattan high society, the man who succeeded in turning his own reprehensibility into a snobbish value, the jet-set oracle who in the 60's extolled the condition of a groupie as the pinnacle of womanhood, the cinéaste who elevated bodily filth to the status of homosexual elegance.

Through this memo, we wish to refresh your memory: people who regularly hobnob with Mr. Warhol, their personal integrity notwithstanding, are not viewed with relish by your constituency. Perhaps a more salient example is former President Ford and his wife, who used to invite Mr. Warhol (but not Mr. Solzhenitsyn, of course) to the White House and whose social preferences were not unnoticed among the electorate. We ourselves know a fair number of good, conservative Republicans who, in 1976, refrained from voting altogether in order not to cast their vote in favor of Mr. Ford and his *careless* fraternizing with untidy and cynical fashionableness.

Thus, we humbly suggest that you might want to ponder that weighty quote from the Book of Wisdom featuring our friend, Edward Bear, which seems to us rather apposite:

> [Rabbit] trotted along happily, and by-and-by he crossed the stream and came to the place where his friends-and-relations lived. There seemed to be even more of them about than usual this morning . . .

Hostages

It's all over and, to our mind, we came out even. Mr. Carter's handling of the episode was dismal, vacillating and inept, but, in the end, it paid off. With the exception of the disastrous rescue mission—which bared our appalling unpreparedness, thus alerting our centers of opinion and power—we did not go to war, we did not pay a ransom and we bailed out the hostages with Iran's own money. We had eight military casualties, and fifty-two people suffered through a period of severe deprivation and humiliation. The nation as a whole has been humbled, has lost a lot of its prestige. On the other hand, the American sense of national awareness underwent a magnificent renaissance after the last fifteen years of radical procommunist indoctrination and the efforts of liberal fellow-travelers to anesthetize it to the point of atrophy. For the first time in almost two decades, the overwhelming majority of American people felt that the Iranian aggression against America and its good name was their personal insult—for which the best response was to rally around the spirit of the community, colloquially called the flag. However, the mood did not demand imperialistic solutions (go, kill, damn the consequences!) just to save face—the fate of the hostages notwithstanding—as did the colonialist powers during the last century. And *this* is our moral victory.

What scholars and diplomats alike should learn is that a late-20th-century revolution—be it Marxist or religious in origin—is always fiercely totalitarian in a way unknown to previous ages. That means that its doctrine, its rationale, its dialectics, its political techniques and its daily practice will always be based on a Big Monstrous Orwellian Lie. Lying has been the lifeblood of every revolution known to us since 1917, lying of such proportion that we need new notions and words just to understand its impact on reality. The Iranians, Islamic spiritualists that they claim to be, learned well from Lenin, Hitler and Mao: they displayed to perfection a total rape of reality, a total inversion of truth, a transmutation of facts and rationality so profound that it left no room for human interrelation. It was frightful to recognize how quickly the Islamic moral fundamentalists were able to convert to, adopt and put into use the Gulag science of annihilating man and humanness. We got a brief glimpse into the mindset of the warriors who wage war against Israel; now we should have a better idea of what this outpost of Western principles is confronting, what its soldiers are fighting for.

Professional Solace Caterers

Since the days of the Vietnam War —when some Protestant and Catholic clergy consciously took up the role of communist allies in this country—we have suspected that politicized religion and human religious needs have parted company in a not-so-mysterious way. To our mind, this parting had less to do with God's word than with human stupidity, vanity, self-righteousness and ignorance. Those characteristics

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Persuasion At Work **offers options to think about.**

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came to full bloom in the activities and postures of such men of God as the Berrigans, Rev. William Sloane Coffin and many like them—which, perhaps, confirms that old Biblical truth: nothing serves God better than man's humbleness of mind and heart (which tells him not to be so sure that he has the answer to every earthly dilemma). The accounts of the hostages ably bear out our suspicions. One of them, Mr. Charles Jones, openly accused some of the visiting clergymen of serving his oppressors and our enemies.

Environmentalist Chutzpah

The member of President Reagan's Cabinet whose nomination was responsible for more liberal face contortions and psychotic eye squints than even Secretary Haig's was Secretary of the Interior James Watt. He was viewed as a 20th-century Tamerlane, a zoological fiend, a fire-belching dragon whose life's mission was to turn the American landscape into heaps of coal dust and pools of greasy oil. Every bona-fide American procommunist operative instantly became an exalted, bucolic lover of meadows and swapped his copy of Lenin's *Selected Works* for a manual on the cultivation of grasshoppers at the very mention of Mr. Watt's name.

The fascinating thing about this witch hunt was the insolence of the inverted truth. Mr. Watt grew up in Wyoming, so he must have known something about his native land, he must have felt some sentiment for the majesty of God-given splendor of the vicinity in which his cradle stood. Nonetheless, his detractors at *The Nation* and *Rolling Stone*—who live in the fetid canyons between Sixth Avenue and Carl Schurtz Park, whose sole contact with nature is when they encounter dog droppings on the sidewalk—assumed that he hated Wyoming and that he wanted to destroy it. According to this, they were the only ones who knew how to love sagebrush and sierras. □

Journalism

Hello, Repulsive!

According to legend, Mr. Alexander Woolcott, the famed *New Yorker* critic and paragon of petulance, used to greet people in the morning with the phrase: "Hello, repulsive!" Justly or not, he assumed that nothing but abomination was to be expected from *every* fellow human who chanced to cross his path. We do not share his pessimism but we are tempted to admit—after leafing through this nation's newspapers, magazines and journals of opinion—that Mr. Woolcott's salutation contains at least a nugget of healthy wisdom.

Of late, no one deserves this greeting more than a certain Alan Wolfe, *The Nation's* hyperactive editorial contributor. We have quoted him before in these pages as wishing America to be "divided, disrupted and disunified." Here are a couple of other samples of his *Nation*-al views:

> In the last few years, the United States has embarked on a course so deeply reactionary, so negative and mean-spirited, so chauvinistic and self-deceptive that our times may soon rival the McCarthy era.

Professor Wolfe is part of the highest-paid academic organization in the country—City University of New York. He publishes whatever he wants in a once-respectable and still-influential weekly. He can indulge with impunity in any prevarication.

And then we could read the following from Professor Wolfe on the subject of Israel versus the PLO:

> . . . actions speak louder than words, and Israel has taken most of the offensive actions.

Of course, it was Israel that first murdered school children, kidnapped and executed unarmed athletes, planted bombs to kill at random even infants, women and elderly people. Hello, repulsive . . . . □

Liberal Culture

Demi-Intellectuality

To call Mr. John Huston a lowbrow would raise many brows. To call him demi- or quarter-intelligent would still seem improper. But what should we opine on the basis of this quote in an interview he gave to *Rolling Stone?*

> I'm too sympathetic toward the criminal mentality. Thomas Mann saw a very profound relationship between the criminal and the artist. So do I. I know what he meant. They're both outlaws.

Anyone with secondary-school edification knows the distinction between outlaws, rebels, nonconformists and innovators. Giotto was not an outlaw; neither was J. S. Bach; nor was Thomas Mann. They all seem to us to have been artists in a more lasting sense than Mr. Huston. Mann saw nothing of profundity in relating the criminal mentality to artistry. He wrote a novel, *Confessions of Felix Krull: Confidence Man,* a picaresque *scherzo* in which he probed the connection between artistry and charlatanry, or rather actorship—not criminality. Mr. Huston must have misread the novel, or perhaps he just readjusted it to match some kind of demi-intelligent conclusion. □

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More Anticapitalism

A popular rendition of the recent Japanese success in a slumping U.S. auto industry reads as follows:

> . . . we have no one to blame but ourselves and the former leaders of our automotive industry—many of whom are enjoying retirement on the fat pensions and bonuses voted to them by stockholders and boards of directors.
>
> Undoubtedly many of these executives, well-acquainted with the corporate tenure system, realized that they would remain in the top echelon only a few more years and settled for 'profit in my time.'
>
> Now their shortsighted folly, their 'après moi le déluge' philosophy, has come home to roost.

Entitled "Who's to Blame," *Parade Magazine's* indignant "Intelligence Report" leaves the reader with little doubt about the identity of the culprits. Detroit, we are told, is suffering from self-inflicted wounds. Apparently the leaders of the most important industry in America have allowed their companies to lose billions of dollars and to close 300,000 jobs to its workers, plus 650,000 jobs in related businesses, for their personal gain. The industry's management could also read *Time* magazine's cover story forecasting that the new cars ". . . are unlikely to reignite the American love affair with the auto," while the *New York Times Magazine* eulogized that ". . . the old days, the great days, are gone." (A few pages further in this same article it is pointed out that as recently as 1979 General Motors had the third-best sales year in its 70-year history and its fourth-largest total annual revenue.)

In the finger-pointing conclusion, *Time* states its case:

> . . . the auto industry's problems rest with Detroit's managers, who failed to plan for a new-car market after the 1974 oil embargo.

However, *Time* gives us little information to support such a sweeping verdict, for, only a few paragraphs before, it reported that, "Just 18 months ago, Detroit was fearful that it could not build enough big V-8-powered sedans to meet consumer demand. The industry in 1978 rang up $3 billion in profits. One hot-selling car . . . got a modest twelve miles to the gallon . . ." And even though Detroit responded characteristically to those market demands, the *New York Times* demurred, "But the *inevitable* trend was toward smaller cars, though the industry ignored it" (Emphasis added). *Parade Magazine* scoffed, "Even after the fuel shortage of 1973—when the future was as obvious as the top line of an optometrist's reading chart—Detroit's executives continued to delay in ordering the necessary retooling for new smaller, 4-cylinder, economical cars."

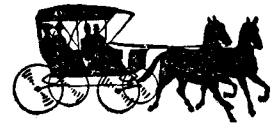
Was this a case of corporate myopia? Negligence? Greed?

In a chronology of the automobile industry's current problems, *Harper's* contributing editor, William Tucker, answers these questions by shattering some popular assumptions about what happened to Detroit.* Tucker's account amounts to nothing less than a total inversion of the current mythology of the car industry. The record from the embargo to the present shows that the industry's problems stem predominantly from a mixed bag of insidious public policies and the usual election-year political grandstanding. Not surprisingly, political engineering of the "energy crisis" consistently produced results contrary to its proclaimed intentions.

One of the first major items of energy legislation was a repudiation of President Ford's goal to decontrol oil. An election-year Congress was eager to pass the 1975 Energy Policy and Conservation Act, extending Nixon's price controls on domestic oil, and to them were added fuel-economy standards. The effect of this bill was to ensure cheap gas by rolling back the per-barrel price, while at the same time mandating stringent gas-mileage standards on American cars. The relatively cheap gas encouraged consumer demand for both gas and large cars, but simultaneously forced the auto industry to offer consumers "downsized" cars.

The following year, the Federal Energy Administration presented consumers with a $1.09-per-barrel rollback. The American public once again got the message. Big-car sales exploded, setting records monthly in the Cadillac, Lincoln-Mercury and Oldsmobile divisions. American's highest-mileage car, the Chevette, for which huge sales were anticipated, failed to ignite demand and G.M. had to cut back its production. Midyear 1976 saw imports fall to 13.2 percent while American subcompacts were a dismal 7.4 percent of sales. Big-car (and van) sales remained high until after the Iranian production shutdown. Tucker reports: "On the day the Shah was overthrown, there were long waiting lists for some of Ford's and Chrysler's larger models."

On the balance, it appears that the U.S. car makers have done exceedingly well to satisfy demand over the last seven years in an unpredictable and highly manipulated market. Yet the American media and the American reality, for a long time, have been little-interrelated notions: to the liberal press, any opportunity to condemn American business now has acquired the same significance that crossing oneself has to a faithful Catholic. (RAV) □



Harper's, November 1980, "The Wreck of the Auto Industry."

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The Sin of Incoherence

Early in its history, the Rockford College Institute published a pamphlet entitled "The Sin of Incoherence," in which we delineated the peculiar incongruity of the social and cultural attitudes which are shaped by the Liberal Culture's invasions of our mentalities and sensitivities, all of which affect the daily life of a person and a society in a most pernicious sense. A good example of such incoherence was given, of late, when it became known that Mr. Rupert Murdoch, the press buccaneer from Australia, intended to acquire the London *Times.*

Mr. Murdoch owns the *New York Post,* an obtuse and rather sleazy tabloid (*Time* magazine calls it "racy") which has deteriorated in terms of credibility since he took it over, *New York* magazine, an organ of tinsel hedonism for big-city demi-intelligentsia in which ungrammatical phrases about food and ready-to-wear *couture* attempt to create an atmosphere of refinement, and *Village Voice,* a battered flagship of *démodé* anarcho-bohemianism which sort of foams at the mouth in its writing on politics, arts and letters, and whose social battles are mainly confined to chastising America because it does not help homosexuals recover from weird diseases acquired as a result of their unsalubrious exertions. And now, Mr. Murdoch is about to acquire the ultimate power over the London *Times,* an ancient bulwark of rationality, civility and enlightened love of tradition, which by nature should oppose the moral paltriness of the *Post, New York* and *VV,* but will be somehow dependent on their joint commercial success.

There's a lot of bemuddled debate going on about Mr. Murdoch's activities. To us things look rather uncomplicated. We think that any press cartel is an odious reduction of freedom of thought. Our sense of liberty and moral responsibility is more insulted by Mr. Murdoch's grubby syncretism than by open totalitarian encroachment. We think that his prosperity is the best proof of Western decadence. We think that those who work for him—in whichever of his enterprises and in whatever capacity—are intellectual clowns. We think that what he is and what he does turns democratic civilization into a parody of itself. □

Humanness

Village Voice, whose peculiar expressiveness of style, or its medium, is, of course, its message, once again ran the notorious photo of John Lennon and his wife, both clad only in some discreet, unobtrusive necklaces, with their reproductive equipment well displayed on the printed page. Their sincere, funky, warm nakedness was supposed to attest to their loving, open, innocent humanness, the purity of their souls and of the *Zeitgeist.* We were disgusted when we saw it in the 60's, appalled mostly by the two subcultural heroes' ordinary unattractiveness, which somehow did not connote in our perception with either sincerity or warmth. Seeing the same picture published in *VV* in January 1981, a few weeks after Mr. Lennon's tragic death, tinged our disgust with contempt for both *VV's* editors and the pictorialized human items, however much we tried to fend off this inappropriate feeling in the face of the recent mournful events. Mr. Lennon, who, since his death, has been fashioned into a spiritual symbol of our epoch, suddenly did not look human at all—he seemed to be just a piece of biology, and an unprepossessing one, at that. His part eclipsed him, he somehow ceased to exist other than through a display of obtuseness which is hardly associated with music, charm or clarity of ideas. We felt relieved and absolved from any compunction to mourn any longer. □

In the Mail

"The 1980 Moscow Olympics: Politics and Policy" by H. Joachim Maitre; Hoover Institution; Stanford, California. Remarks to the April 1980 meeting of the Philadelphia Society by a former olympic attaché for the National Olympic Committee of Germany.

"Taiwan: Pawn or Pivot?" by Parris H. Chang, Gerald McBeath, Ralph N. Clough; Ethics and Public Policy Center; Washington, D.C. Reprinted from the ***Wilson Quarterly,*** these three essays deal with the past, present and uncertain future of Taiwan.

"U.S.-Soviet Relations: A Strategy for the Future" by Anthony Harrigan; U.S.I.C. Educational Foundation; Nashville, Tennessee. An address delivered at the Institute for Soviet and East European Studies, John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio which analyzes the possible consequences of foreign-policy decisions.

The New Right: We're Ready to Lead **by Richard A. Viguerie; The Viguerie Company; Falls Church, Virginia.** The origins, roles, goals and personalities of the New Right.

The Gold Clause **edited by Henry Mark Holzer; Books In Focus, Inc.; New York.** A handbook on gold clauses in contracts which includes essays, briefs and court opinions on all major aspects of gold clauses.

Who Owns the Media **edited by Benjamin M. Compaine; Harmony Books; New York.** The importance of the media in a free society, the major media firms and the extent of cross-media ownership as well as the latest trends in antitrust, cablevision and other issues.

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Liberal Culture

Sex Aids

Mademoiselle—once an organ of college-age young women—highlights two features on its January 1981 cover: "How to Get Your Way in Bed" and "Vibrators: Today's Love Toy." The first is written by a "psychotherapist" and the second by a "medical doctor"—the legitimacy of cool expertise is thus assured.

It would be fatuous to argue that in other ages and cultures college-age girls (18-24) didn't know what vibrators were or how to get their way in bed. But they pretended not to, and they would have been shocked—more or less sincerely—if a magazine which was supposed to reflect their interests had informed them about such options. On that pretense an enormous edifice of sensual and customary sensitivities was erected, one which served mankind well through millennia. A college-age girl, when confronted with the existence of something like a vibrator, was once supposed to blush, and cultures thrived on this little convention. Now, thanks to *Mademoiselle,* she can approach this little contraption with all the subtlety and elegance of a sanitation worker on duty.

Mademoiselle is published by Condé Nast, a giant, impersonal corporation which does not give a damn if it turns its youthful readers into sexual robots as long as they buy the magazine. The man who is in charge of these operations, responsible for the Condé Nast editorial policy, is a certain Alexander Liberman—an icon of chic liberalism, a sculptor, allegedly an artist. We presume he is aware of his part in the wholesale destruction of feminine sensitivities in which *his Mademoiselle* is engaged. We do not know if he does it because he wishes to make his product undistinguishable from what is sold in the sex-aid shops on West 42nd Street these days.

The American Way

Marilyn French, the best-selling feminist, is profiled in *American Way,* American Airlines' in-flight magazine. She's asked the question:

> What should men do? 'Become more like us,' says Marilyn softly, raising the Russian Tea Room's delicious boiled tongue to her lips.

She then reports on her children:

> Neither, she says calmly, likes men much. 'But,' she adds with a shrug, 'who does?'

Both Ms. French and *American Way's* adulatory interview prove unequivocally that we have structured a culture unique in mankind's history—a culture that rewards imbecility with fame and fortune.

Toying with Eschatology

The *New York Times Sunday Magazine* recently ran a story on Jean Seberg, an actress of the 60's, who was given later in life to indulgence in drugs and all kinds of behavioral excesses. We could read there a caption under one of Miss Seberg's photographs:

> Miss Seberg and Ahmed Hasmi, with whom she was living when she died.

Even if it is grammatically correct, one is somehow puzzled by the *NYT* editors' sense of the linear sequitur; we always knew that the usage of verbs could be treacherous, but we never expected such riches of journalistic inventiveness.

Certainly the *Chicago Tribune,* the "second paper," couldn't lag behind the Manhattan wizards. Thus, without blinking an eye, its editors ran the appeal issued by the Communist Workers Party after the killing of five of its members by the Ku Klux Klan in Greensboro, North Carolina. We read there:

> We will overthrow the criminal rule of the monopoly capitalist class. Victory will be ours. Long live the CWP five!

We agree that political emotions *can* bring miracles, but we remain unconvinced that they actually do. How the five can live long after they were killed seems to us a riddle. □

Social Register

We are delighted to announce that the celebrities of bolshevik chic in America are in superb condition for the forthcoming procommunist social season. A dazzling series of events, beluga dinners, galas, socialist/realist art happenings, agitprop picnics to raise funds for the Institute of Policy Studies will feature the brightest stars of the Marxist jet set: the Weisses, Cora and Peter, of course, Mr. Marcus Raskin, some friends from abroad, perhaps, fresh from the terrorist training resorts in the Crimea, or from the beaches of Nicaragua. All this will be paid for with money from Cora's father, the radical patriarch magnate, Stalin's adorer, the deceased Mr. Samuel Rubin *lui même,* the founder of the cosmetic conglomerate, Fabergé. Ladies and gentlemen! Isn't it gorgeous that every cent you pay for Fabergé make-up or after-shave helps the effort—through the good services of IPS—to stimulate America's public opinion in favor of the communist takeover of the Third World? How exciting! □

Due to our recent move to new quarters, the production of the March/April issue of *Chronicles of Culture* has been somewhat delayed. The same fate may befall the May/June issue.

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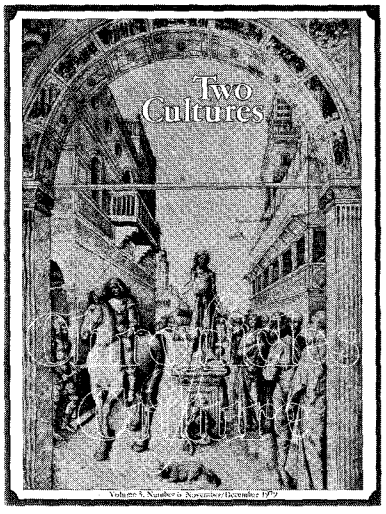
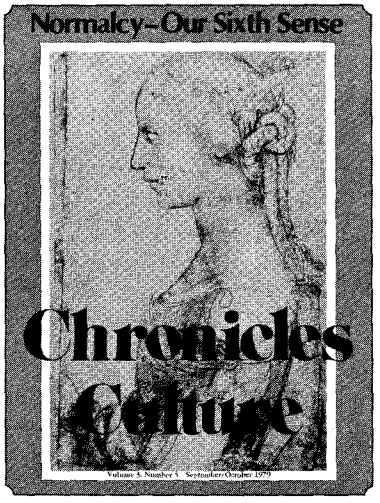
TWO CULTURES

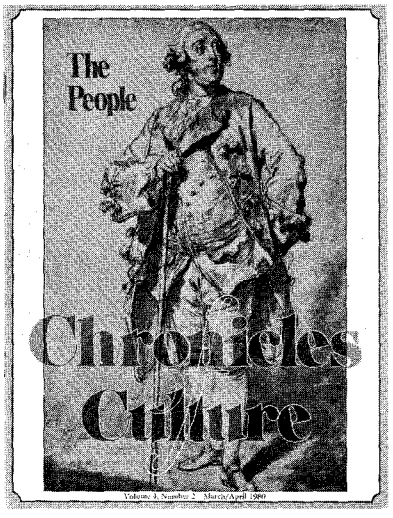


NORMALCY—OUR SIXTH SENSE

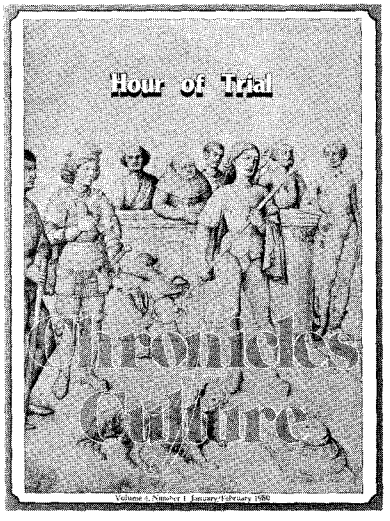


POLITICS & HATRED

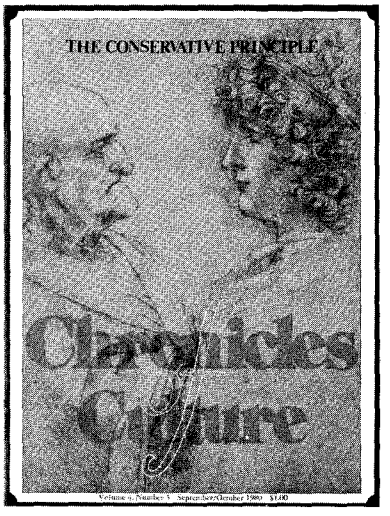
THE PEOPLE



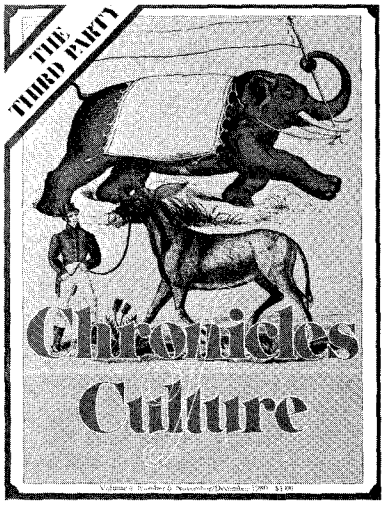
HOUR OF TRIAL



THE CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLE



THE THIRD PARTY



TOWARD CONSERVATISM WITH A HUMAN FACE

ON PATRIOTISM

Chronicles of Culture

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS (above): Jacopo Bellini (1424-1470), Timoteo Viti (1469-1523), Thomas Nast (1840-1902), Jean Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805), Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Giovanni Bellini (1430-1516), Francesco Squarcione (1394-1474). Also featuring original vignettes by Warren Chappell.

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